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REPORT

ON THE

RED RIVER EXPEDITION

of 1870,

BY S. J. DAWSON, ESQUIRE,

CIV 'GINEER.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

REPRINT:

WITH REMARKS ON CERTAIN STRICTURES PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND BY AN OFFICER OF THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

MONTREAL

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RETURN

To an Address of the House of Commons, dated 30th March, 1871, for copy of the Report of Mr. S. J. Dawson, upon the Red River Expedition of 1870; also copy of any document submitted by him in reference to the strictures published in England by an Officer of the Expeditionary Force.

By Command.

J. C. AIKINS,

Secretary of State.

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

Ottawa, 5th April, 1871.

OTTAWA, 22nd March, 1871.

SIR,—In submitting to your notice the following Report on the Red River Expedition, I beg to express the deep appreciation which I must ever entertain of the cordial and unvarying support which, as being in charge of the arrangements necessary for the transport of the Expeditionary Force through the uninhabited region west of Lake Superior, I experienced from your department.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

S. J. DAWSON.

HON. H. L. LANGEVIN, C. B.,

Minister of Public Works, &c., &c., &c., Ottawa.

REPORT

ON THE

RED RIVER EXPEDITION OF 1870,

BY

S. J. DAWSON,

CIVIL ENGINEER.

Early in the winter of last year (1869-70), I received instructions from the Government to provide vessels of a class adapted to the navigation of the waters in the unfrequented region intervening between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement. A military force had to be sent through on the opening of the navigation, and it was a matter of vital importance that these vessels should be of a character to meet the exigencies of such a service.

The route for a distance of two hundred miles, had never been traversed by any vessel larger or stronger than a bark canoe, and the chief officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, who were supposed to be well acquainted with the country, had declared it to be impracticable to their boats.

Among those who gave expression to this opinion was the late Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Company, than whom no one could pretend to greater experience in navigating the inland waters of British North America.

That distinguished gentleman, in a written communication to the Government, which was subsequently published, had expressed his belief that the route was practicable only to bark canoes, and that these (as every one acquainted with such vessels must concede) were not adapted to the conveyance of a military force.

So general was this opinion as to the character of the route, by Lake Superior, and so firmly fixed had it become, that the Imperial Government on two occasions sent troops by way of Hudson's Bay to Fort Garry, once in 1846, when a wing of the 60th foot was led up from that icy sea by Col. Crofton; and again in 1857, when several companies of the Canadian Rifles were sent out.

Having traversed the route by Lake Superior frequently, I was in a position to explain to the Government that the reports as to its impractability were exaggerated, that it had been for many years the high-way of the North-West Company of Canada, and that, after the mountainous country

on the borders of Lake Superior was passed, there would be no difficulty whatever in sending forward a force of considerable numbers, by means of boats.

The suggestions which I had the honor to submit, in this regard, having been approved of, the services of the principal boat-builders throughout the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec were speedily called into requisition. Early in January the first contracts were given out and the work of boat-building went on without interruption until the opening of navigation.

At the same time a number of flat scows were ordered and built for use in shallow rapids, and every article of outfit that could possibly be required, whether in the way of rigging for the boats, tools for repairing them or outfit for the voyageurs, was provided in ample quantity.

I was furthermore directed (in January, 1870), to increase the force on the Thunder Bay Road, in as far as the season and the nature of the locality would permit, so as to have the larger bridges completed and other necessary preparations made, before the opening of navigation. In order the better to ensure these instructions being carried out, an active and experienced officer, Mr. Lindsay Russell, was despatched by way of Superior City, from which place he had to walk two hundred miles on snow shoes to Thunder Bay. A copy of his instructions is annexed, and I may here remark that he executed them with energy and skill.

It was at this time apprehended that the insurgents at Red River might endeavour to tamper with the Saulteux Indians, a tribe which occupies the country about Fort Frances and the Lake of the Woods in formidable numbers, and in order to establish and keep up friendly relations with these Indians, by direction of the Government, I sent instructions to a trusty agent at Fort William, to proceed to Fort Frances, where he had long resided, and enter into communication with the chiefs and leading men of the tribe. A copy of these instructions is hereunto annexed.

Before the navigation opened, it became necessary to secure the services of a number of skilled voyageurs to manage and navigate the boats, and agents were accordingly despatched to the various localities throughout the country where the desired class of men was to be found.

Furthermore, in hiring men for the Public Works, in view of the probability of the necessity arising of their being required as voyageurs, such only were engaged as had had some experience in navigating the inland waters of the country, or in driving logs in rapid rivers. The total number of men thus engaged, either as workmen or voyageurs, was eight hundred, and it was kept at that number throughout the season.

Having been in communication with the military authorities, at various times, during the month of April, I was most careful to inform them as to the condition of the Thunder Bay Road, and the character of the country generally, through which the Expedition would have to pass. They were furnished with maps shewing the length, respectively, of the portages and navigable sections; and in order that there might be no misapprehension as to the state of the road, I submitted to them a memorandum of which the following is a copy:—

"MEMORANDUM.

"OTTAWA, 25th April, 1870.

"When the work of road making was brought to a close last fall, a section of 25 miles, reckoning from Thunder Bay, was practicable to waggons, with only one interruption at the Kaministiquia, which was then unbridged, and continuing on the line an additional section of ten miles was cut out in such a way as to be practicable to oxen with sleds or carts.

"The two large rivers—Kaministiquia and Matawin—which cross the line, were bridged last winter, and bridges were also built over the more considerable of the smaller streams, so that, practically, the work of bridging may be considered as completed.

"It may be added that portage roads were laid out and opened, in as far as such work could be done in winter, between Shebandowan Lake and Lac des Mille Lacs.

"At the same time instructions were sent to the officer in charge, to set all the available force to work on the road as soon as the snow should have so far cleared off, as to admit of operations thereon being resumed, so that about eighty men are by this time engaged on the unfinished section of the line.

"An additional force of 120 men will be sent to their aid by the first steamer, and a week later, a further number of about fifty will go up.

"OPENING AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PORTAGES.

"The voyageurs who go up in charge of the first shipment of boats should, immediately on their arrival at Thunder Bay, be sent to open and improve the Portages between Shebandowan Lake and Rainy Lake, and for this purpose they can be supplied with canoes at Fort William, and outfit from the Government stores at the works.

"THE WAGGON SERVICE.

"Stables will be required at Thunder Bay, at the half-way Station, and at Shebandowan Lake, together with tents or huts for the accommodation of the teamsters. Intermediate between the half-way station and Thunder Bay, on the one side, and between the first named place and Shebandowan Lake, on the other, there should be camps as resting places where the horses could be fed. These camps would only require one or two men to be stationed at each, to take care of the hay and oats, and have victuals in readiness for the teamsters as they passed.

"Both at Thunder Bay and the half-way Station of the Kaministiquia, it would be necessary to have a blacksmith with shoeing apparatus and a supply of horse shoes.

"The waggon service would require in all—

Teamsters	73
Men at Camps	4
Overseers	3

Blacksmiths	2
Clerk or time keeper	1
	83

"BOATS AND SUPPLIES OVER THUNDER BAY ROAD.

"Operations in this regard may be at once commenced by organizing the waggon service and sending boats, provisions, oats, hay, &c., forward to the Matawin Crossing, 25 miles from Thunder Bay. And at this point a small space should be cleared to guard against fire, and a few huts erected to serve as storehouses.

"THE BOAT SERVICE.

"In providing for this, three voyageurs should be sufficient for each boat, that is, with the aid of the soldiers in rowing and in transporting articles over the Portages.

"With this arrangement it would be necessary, that, in running rapids, the crews of two boats should be put in one, running first one, and then the other. The voyageurs may not be all equally expert, and, perhaps, four to each boat might, in some cases be necessary.

"It is reasonable to believe, however, that after a little practice, many of the soldiers will become almost as skilful in the management of a boat as the voyageurs, and they will have had an opportunity of gaining experience before any of the difficult sections are reached.

"In case of necessity, additional force can be supplied, to some extent, from among the men on the works, most of whom have had more or less experience as boatmen. Each brigade of boats would require an overseer voyageur, for the maintenance of discipline among the crews, calling them to time in the morning, &c.

"There should also be a clerk or two attached to the force, to keep the time and accounts of the voyageurs.

"When the greater part of the boats, and a considerable portion of the supplies, have reached Shebandowan Lake, oxen and horses should be placed on the Kashaboiwe, Height of Land, Baril, Brulé, and French Portages, as follows:

"On Kashaboiwe Portage, 1 span of horses, 2 yoke of oxen.
Height of Land, 1 span of horses, 2 yoke of oxen.
Baril Portage, 2 yoke of oxen.
Brulé Portage, 2 yoke of oxen.
French Portage, 2 yoke of oxen, 2 span of horses.

"It would, at first, barely be possible, to supply provender for horses and oxen at any point beyond the French Portage.

"Assuming that on reaching Fort Frances, the force will require one hundred boats, there will remain forty, besides scows, with which to send forward supplies from the terminus of the Thunder Bay road at Shebandowan Lake to Fort Frances.

"These might be distributed on the different sections as follows:

	Boats.	Scows.
"On Shebandowan Lake	4	
Kashaboiwe Lake	2	
Summit Pond		1
Lac des Mille Lacs	3	
Baril Lake	2	
Windegoostigoon Lakes	4	
Kaogassikok Lake	3	
Pond, Deux Rivières Portage		1
Sturgeon Lake	4	
River between Sturgeon Lake and Island Portage		4
Nequaquon Lake	3	
Between Nequaquon and Nameukan Lakes, on South Channel	4	
Nameukan Lake	2	
Rainy Lake	5	
Total	36 boats and 6 scows.	
Reserve	4	
	40	

"By distributing the boats to be employed in the transport of supplies in relays, as above, much labor in portaging will be avoided, and fewer men required to man them, inasmuch as the crews of different sections can join together when necessary.

"To man the boats in the Lake region when distributed in this way, one hundred and thirty men, with three competent overseers, would be sufficient. Of these at least thirty men should be stationed permanently on the rough section between Sturgeon Lake and Island Portage.

"Three boat carpenters should accompany the force with tools and material to make repairs when necessary.

"Provision has already been made by the Government for the construction of the huts and stables referred to in the foregoing, and sawed lumber has been ordered for those to be built at Thunder Bay.

"(Signed,) S. J. DAWSON."

Fully appreciating the difficulties to be encountered on a road of forty five miles in length, of which a section of twenty five miles, only, was represented as being practicable to waggons, and an additional section of ten miles opened so that oxen with carts or sleds could pass over it, His Excellency the Lieutenant General Commanding the Forces determined on sending forward the regular troops to aid in opening and improving the road, and the Colonel in immediate command of the expeditionary Field Force, also, well aware that much work was needed on the road, before the stores could pass over it, recommended certain companies of the troops to be sent forward to aid in its construction.

It had been suggested to the military authorities that the troops might

pass by land from the Lake of the Woods to Fort Garry; but, in order that they might be in a position to judge for themselves as to whether it would be better to go by that route or by way of the Winnipeg, I sent them a memorandum of which the following is a copy:

"MEMORANDUM.

"LAKE OF THE WOODS TO FORT GARRY.

"OTTAWA, 18 April, 1870.

"Accompanying this memorandum is a rough plan of the Winnipeg River made from Track Survey, together with a table of distances, showing the length of the Portages and Navigable sections, respectively, between Rat Portage at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg. From the Lake of the Woods to Fort Garry are two routes, the one by water, being that just referred to, and the other by land from the "North West Angle."

"Having regard to the passage of a large body of men with outfit and supplies, the following facts are submitted with a view of supplying information on which an opinion can be based as to which it would be most advantageous to adopt.

"THE WATER ROUTE.

"By this route, the distance between Rat Portage, at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods, and Fort Alexander, at the entrance to Lake Winnipeg, is in round numbers 149 miles.

"In this distance the number of Portages is twenty five and their aggregate length as ascertained by actual measurement three miles and six chains.

"The Winnipeg River presents no serious difficulties to the largest class of canoes and it has long been navigated by the Hudson Bay Company's Boats.

"In the navigable sections, the depth of water is sufficient for large boats and there are but few heavy rapids to be run, and these short.

"In several instances the entrances to the carrying places are close to the brow of the falls, and in such cases boats should be brought in with caution, one by one.

"As a general rule, with practised guides and skilful boatmen, the Winnipeg may be considered a safe river, or, if an exception exists, it is at the seven portages, which have always to be passed with great care.

"As canoe men, the Indians who frequent the Winnipeg cannot be excelled, and, as boatmen, many of them have had a good deal of experience.

"The Winnipeg River, in its general character, may be regarded as a series of Lakes separated by short rapids or water-falls. A brief description of the different sections will be found in the printed slips annexed.

"THE LAND ROUTE.

"The country lying between the Lake of the Woods and Red River is low and swampy, and, except on the route adopted as a line of road, quite

impracticable, at least it has never yet been passed over in summer, except by a few wandering hunters. Even the Indians traverse it but rarely, and the half-breeds of Red River never attempt to pass, except in winter.

"The distance between the 'North West Angle' of the Lake of the Woods and Fort Garry, by the line adopted for a road, is ninety miles—sixty miles being through a wooded country and thirty over open prairie.

"Starting from the North West Angle, and proceeding Westward there is, first, a section of thirty miles quite in a state of nature, and as yet unopened. This section abounds in swamps and marshes, but is nevertheless practicable for a road. Then follows a stretch of thirty miles of line, newly opened through a wooded region, still very swampy, but not so much so as that first referred to. In this section, the road runs for many miles along a narrow gravelly ridge, with impassable swamps, spreading out to the horizon on either side. The forest country ends at Oak Point settlement, and from thence to Fort Garry the distance is thirty miles over open prairie.

"It should be mentioned that on the Red River, which has to be crossed on approaching Fort Garry from the East, there is no bridge. The channel is 400 feet in width and the water deep—carriages are at present crossed by means of a scow.

"THE TWO ROUTES COMPARED

"The obstacles to the navigation of the Winnipeg may be briefly summed up as presenting three miles and six chains of land carriage in twenty-five different sections, the longest of which is $\frac{3}{8}$ of a mile in length.

"On the other hand, the land route presents thirty miles of road to be opened, ninety miles of a march, and a broad unbridged river, just in front of a fortress, to cross.

"On the land route, moreover, even after the thirty miles of new road were opened, it is probable that there would be difficulty in obtaining the means of transport; added to which, it would be in the power of the insurgents, if so disposed, to offer serious opposition, on the march, more especially where the road runs on a narrow gravelly ridge, as described, with impassable swamps on either side.

"By the Water route, the expedition would carry with it its own means of locomotion and crossing rivers. It would be quite out of the power of the insurgents to offer opposition at any place nearer than Fort Alexander, and, even there, they could not do so unless they should be able to provide themselves with boats in the Red River settlement. Neither Lake Winnipeg nor the Winnipeg River can be approached by land, from the direction of Fort Garry, on account of the impracticable character of the country, which abounds in bogs and marshes.

"The Land route would be fatiguing, to the men, and they would be terribly harrassed with insects, such as mosquitoes, black flies, &c., among the marshes.

"By the Water route, there would be stiff work on the portages, but it would not last long at a time, and there would be relief on the open and breezy lakes intervening between them.

"In the one case, the men would reach Fort Garry fatigued with a long march and hard work in road making, in the other they would arrive vigorous and fresh.

"(Signed.) S. J. DAWSON."

"LAKE of the Woods to Fort Garry by way of the Winnipeg River.

	Land Yards.	Water Miles and Chains.	REMARKS.
Rat Portage	286		Good open portage.
River		9.	
Les Dalles		20	Good running.
River		21.	Fine navigable section.
Grande Décharge		20	Run or portaged, according to height of water.
River		2.40	In this section two rapids "Décharge" and ["Steeprock."
Yellow Mud Portage	110		Approach with care.
River		1.	A heavy pitch to run or portage.
Pine Portage	230		
River		17.40	"Cave" rapids just below portage, short run, then [fine among islands.
Portage de l'Isle	220		Often run.
River		21.	Fine navigation, two ripples near Chute à Jacquot.
Chute à Jacquot Port	110		
River		7.	Fine after leaving foot of Chute.
1st Point des Bois	286		
River		.05	
2nd Point des Bois	110		No difficulty, but care required with boats, especially at head of 2nd portage.
River		1.16	
3rd Point des Bois	66		
River		4.	Quiet water.
Slave Falls Portage	660		Approach this fall with caution.
River		6.	No impediment.
La Barriere Portage	66		
River		6.	No impediment.
Otter Falls		.10	Always run, but requires experienced guides.
River		7.	Good, only one little rapid to run.
The Seven Portages. (Yds. chs.)			
1st Portage 132			
River .. .05			
2nd Port'ge 188			
River .. .10			
3rd Port'ge 176			
River .. .40			
4th Port'ge 66	892	2.08	The total distance past the Seven Portages is under three miles. This is the worst, indeed, the only dangerous part of the Winnipeg. It is avoided except at low water, by going by the "Pinawa" channel.—See Map.
River .. .48			
5th Port'ge 88			
River .. .05			
6th Port'ge 110			
River .. .60			
7th Port'ge 132			
River		16.40	Good to Galais de Bonnet.
1st Galais de Bonnet	44		
River		.74	
2nd Galais de Bonnet	88		
River		3 50	
Grand Bonnet Portage	1,122		This is the longest portage on the route, but it is [well opened.
River		.50	
Petit Bonnet Portage	100		
River		3.	
White Mud Portage	330		
River		3.	
1st Silver Falls	154		The two "Silver" Falls are in close proximity, and can be passed in one portage of twenty-five chains.
River		.05	
2nd Silver Falls	286		
River		5.	Two little rapids to run.
Pine Portage	264		Last portage.
River to Fort Alexander		6.50	
	3.06 chs	145.45	
Fort Alexander to Stone Fort		60.	Through Lake Winnipeg and up Red River, no impediment.

Synopsis.

	Mls.	Chs.
" Navigable waters in sections as above, between Rat Portage and Fort Alexander	145	45
Aggregate length of Portages	3	06
Total	148	51

Distances, by Water Route, from Fort Frances to Stone Fort.

	Mls.	Chs.
Fort Frances to Lake of the Woods, no impediment	67.	
Lake of the Woods to Rat Portage, no impediment	64.	
Rat Portage to Fort Alexander, as per table above	148	51
Fort Alexander, to Stone Fort, no impediment	60.	
	339	51

Note.

" The seven Portages might be much improved by extending the carrying places, as follows:

	Yds.	Chs.
1. Let a portage be cut from the head of the first chute, clear through to the foot of the 3rd chute. Its length would be	880	
Then quiet water for		40
2. Portage past 4th chute	66	
Then quiet water for		48
3. Cut portage by which 5th and 6th chutes can be passed at once	308	
Then quiet water to 7th chute		60
4. Portage past 7th chute	132	
	1386	148

" The 7th chute can be run if the water should prove favorable. A few men of the expedition, with Indians sent in advance, could soon prepare the portages in the manner above indicated."

It would be tedious to enumerate all the details of the preliminary arrangements made to facilitate the passage of the Expeditionary Force through a wilderness which afforded nothing in itself. Suffice to say that, as the result proved, there was scarcely an article which could by any possibility be useful omitted, nor a mechanic, whose services were likely to be called into requisition, left behind. Among the civilians sent forward were boat builders with their tools, blacksmiths with portable forges and carpenters with the implements of their trade.

Waggons for the road transport were provided by Col. Wily of the Militia Department, and by him, also, were purchased the supplies of flour

pork and other provisions for the Expedition. It is due to that careful and energetic officer to say that the supplies were of excellent quality and put in packages of size and weight the best adapted to the means of transport.

In order to establish and keep up regular communication with the expedition, the Government chartered two steamers—the *Chicora* and *Algoma*—as mail boats, both well fitted up and adapted for the conveyance of passengers and stores. These steamers were to be paid at a fixed rate, and were to run between Collingwood and Thunder Bay, leaving the former place, alternately, at intervals of five days, throughout the season of navigation.

ADVANCE OF THE EXPEDITION TO THUNDER BAY, LAKE SUPERIOR.

The *Algoma* set out on her first trip on the 3rd of May, and by her voyageurs and workmen, to the number of one hundred and forty, were sent forward to Thunder Bay. An agent was at the same time despatched to Sault Ste. Marie for the purpose of organizing a force to improve the Portage road on the British side, and to provide means of embarkation at the head of the rapids.

The *Chicora* left Collingwood on the 7th May, freighted with boats, stores, supplies and outfit. By this steamer an additional force of 120 workmen and voyageurs was sent forward.

On reaching Sault Ste. Marie, however, the canal, which is on the United States side, was found to be shut against Canadian Vessels and the *Chicora* had, in consequence, to discharge her cargo at the foot of the rapids on the British side. The voyageurs and workmen immediately joined the force which had been organized, according to the instructions sent by the *Algoma*, to work on the Portage Road, and by the united exertions of the two parties it was quickly put in good order. At the same time a small wharf was run out at the head of the rapids, to facilitate embarkation, and a scow, which had been brought from Collingwood in fitted pieces, was put together to serve the purpose of conveying troops and stores from the wharf, were the water was shallow, to vessels which came to anchor in the river, which they had to do at some distance from the shore.

In the meantime, the boats were being sent rapidly forward; those which had been built at Quebec and Toronto were brought by railroad to Collingwood to be there shipped in the regular steamers, while a propellor with two schooners in tow, freighted with boats and stores was passing up by the Welland Canal.

The steamer *Algoma* which, as stated, had left Collingwood on the 3rd May, made the trip without interruption to Thunder Bay; but, on returning, according to an arrangement made with her Captain, she did not re-pass the Canal, but remained at the head of the Sault Ste. Marie Rapids.

Thus, although the Canal was shut, the precautions taken ensured a line of communication, the *Algoma* being available for transport on Lake Superior and the *Chicora* on Lake Huron, with an intervening Portage of three miles on the British side, at Sault Ste. Marie.

The Canal, being for the time, closed to British Vessels, the *Chicora* on her next trip took forward a detachment of Volunteers to Sault Ste. Marie, as well as a quantity of Military Stores and returning, was again ready to start on the 21st of May.

By this trip (21st May) there went forward several companies of the regular troops and a number of voyageurs and workmen; on arriving at Sault Ste. Marie, it was found that orders had been sent by the United States Authorities to allow Canadian vessels, having no troops or military stores on board, to pass through the Canal.

In this state of matters, the troops having been disembarked, on the British side, marched over the Portage Road, while the *Chicora* passed through the Canal. The Propeller and schooners already referred to had been in waiting for some days below the locks, and they also were permitted to pass. The troops were soon brought on board at the head of the rapids and the *Chicora* proceeded on her way to Thunder Bay, where she arrived on the 25th of May.

I may here remark that no action on the part of the Canadian Government could have provided for the arrival of the Troops at an earlier date; when the *Algoma* set out from Collingwood, on the 3rd of May, it was not even known that she would get through on account of the ice which generally remains in the straits, above Sault Ste. Marie, till a later time than that at which she would be there, and when the *Chicora* left on the 7th it was well understood that there was at least a probability of her finding the Canal shut. In view of such a contingency, men had been set to work on the Portage Road, on the British side, at the earliest possible moment, so that, if delay occurred, it was due to no remissness on the part of those who acted for the Canadian Government.

The route being once fairly open, voyageurs, together with toops, military stores and boats continued to arrive from time to time, but although the Sault Ste. Marie Canal was now free to vessels with ordinary freight, it was still shut to troops and military stores, and it proved to be a very tedious process to get the large amount of articles landed at that place, in the first instance, over the portage. It was towards the end of June (about the 27th), before the last of the military stores arrived, and a large proportion of the horses and waggons, did not reach Thunder Bay until that time. I would invite particular attention to this fact, inasmuch as the state of the Thunder Bay road has been made to answer for the delay which occurred, when, up to the date I have stated, there was a deficiency in the means of transport, even for that portion of the road which was admitted to be in good order.

This deficiency in the means of transport, on the Thunder Bay road, might have been remedied, as I shall shew further on, by bringing additional numbers of horses and waggons from Collingwood. In the meantime, I may remark that no avoidable delay occurred in getting the stores over the Sault Ste. Marie portage road. The work at that place was in charge of a most able and energetic officer, Col. Bolton, and I had placed a strong force of voyageurs at his disposal. When I passed Sault Ste. Marie, on the 23rd May, Col. Bolton, took occasion to speak in the highest terms of the aid which he had received from the voyageurs, and from Mr. Graham, the officer immediately over them. The regard was mutual, and I have much pleasure in saying that Col. Bolton's kind and considerate bearing to the voyageurs and all with whom he came in contact, made him a general favorite with the civilian portion of the Red River expeditionary force.

Lake Superior to Shebandowan Lake.

The condition of the road when the first detachment of troops reached Thunder Bay, on the 25th May, was quite as good as it had been represented to be, or anticipated. The larger bridges, embracing two formidable structures crossing the Kaministiquia and Matawin Rivers, respectively, had been completed. A temporary bridge had been thrown over the Sunshine Brook, and material was in readiness for a similar structure at the Oskondagé—a small stream at the further limit to which the road had reached—the distance practicable to horses and waggons, reckoning from Thunder Bay, was twenty-eight miles, and from thence a track, over which oxen with carts or waggons could pass, had been roughtly opened as far as the Oskondagé, which later point is thirty-seven miles distance from Prince Arthur's landing.

The officer commanding the Field Force, accompanied by Mr. Lindsay Russell, rode over the line, to a distance of several miles beyond the Matawin Bridge, soon after his arrival, and expressed himself to the effect that it was as good as he expected to find it, and quite equal to what the country roads in Canada usually are.

At this time the voyageurs and other laborers, who had been sent forward by the *Algoma* were at work on the unfinished sections, and several companies of troops were soon sent to repair such places as had sustained damage from the crib work on side hill cuttings having been partially destroyed by a great fire which had swept over the country, a few days previous to our arrival.

In order the better to understand the measures adopted for the progress of the expedition, it is necessary to have clearly in view the condition and character of the route between Prince Arthur's Landing and Shebandowan Lake, at which latter place it was finally to embark in boats. The distance between these places is forty-five miles by land, but for three miles downwards from Shebandowan Lake, to a point now called "Ward's Landing" the Matawin River, although presenting a series of shallow rapids, is navigable to flat scows, or lightly loaded boats. Ward's Landing was, therefore, the point to be attained with the road, as from thence to Shebandowan Lake material and supplies could be conveyed in scows, which had been provided for the purpose. The precise distance between Prince Arthur's Landing, Thunder Bay, and Ward's Landing, is forty-one miles and seventy chains, of which a section of twenty-eight miles was practicable to horses with waggons, on the arrival of the first detachment of the troops. But, for the sake of lucidity in description, let the waggon road be considered as ending at a place called the Matawin Bridge, twenty-five miles from Thunder Bay, as that is the point to which the waggons, in the first instance, actually came. This waggon road was succeeded by a stretch of twelve miles, roughly opened, to the Oskondagé, and this, again, by a further section of four miles and seventy chains, ending at Ward's Landing. This latter was being cleared on our arrival.

There were thus three sections of road, more or less advanced, viz: 25 miles of waggon road, followed by 12 miles of what is known in such cases as ox-road, and four miles and 70 chains of road under process of being opened, in all, 41 miles and 70 chains

As the river will be frequently referred to, a sketch, shewing its position, relative to the road, is hereunto annexed. From Thunder Bay to the Matawin Bridge, the distance is, as stated, 25 miles by road. Between the mouth of the Kaministiquia and the same point, it is 45 miles by the river, presenting in this distance, 12 miles of quiet water, and 33 miles of shallow rapids, with falls occurring at intervals. The channel of the river, except in the short navigable sections, is exceedingly rough, paved in some instances with boulders of all dimensions and shapes, and in others with sharp schists set on edge. There is little or no danger to men in ascending these rapids, but every risk to boats. To drag them up is a mere matter of brute force, but to save bottoms and keels from being torn to shreds, requires great care, and the greatest care cannot prevent them from being seriously damaged. Although the risk to life is small, the labour of dragging boats over rocks and stones, which afford but an insecure footing, is excessive and otherwise very disheartening to the men.

From the Matawin bridge to the Oskondagé, the distance by the road as already shewn, is 12 miles, by the river it is about 22. From the Matawin Bridge upwards, for a distance of about two miles, to a point called Young's Landing, the river is navigable; proceeding upwards from the latter point, a series of rapids is encountered, perhaps the most difficult that boats were ever forced over. These continue for eight miles, and on this section, none but experienced voyageurs can attempt to pass with boats. The rapids, last referred to, end at a point called Browne's Lane, a Cauldron's Landing, and from thence to the Oskondagé, a further distance of twelve miles, by its windings, the river is navigable to lightly loaded boats. From the Oskondagé upwards to Wards Landing four miles and seventy chains, boats and all material were conveyed by waggon. The total distance by land from Thunder Bay to Oskondagé was 37 miles; by the river between the same points is nearly 70 miles. These descriptions, though tedious, are necessary to the full understanding of the measures adopted for sending forward boats and supplies.

In the memorandum submitted by me to the military authorities, (see page—) I had pointed out the fact that boats and supplies could at once be sent forward as far as the Matawin Bridge, and while this was being done, it was my intention to have set all the available force of workmen and voyageurs to improve and open the unfinished sections of the line, beyond that place, and I may here remark that this was, without any question, as events proved, the proper course to have adopted. It would have saved a vast outlay, and have enabled the Expedition to reach Shebandowan Lake earlier than it did.

A few days after the arrival of the first detachment of troops, the experiment of sending boats forward by waggons was tried, and it suceeded admirably. The waggons were arranged by means of long reaches (that is, poles of sufficient length to admit of the forward and after wheels being put as much as 18 feet apart), the boats were placed bottom upwards on the waggons, the gunwales resting on blocks fitted to receive and support them, and in this way twenty-eight boats were sent forward to the Matawin Bridge, the horses making the round trip, going and returning in three days, and in one instance in two days. Here, then, was proof positive that the boats could easily be sent forward by waggons. But the means of

transport were at this time limited, and instead of increasing them, as might easily have been done, the boats were orderd to the river by the Commandant of the Field force. The distance as already shewn between Thunder Bay and the Matawin Bridge is, by land 25 miles and by the river 45 miles. The road was practicable. The river for a distance of 33 miles, presented a series of stony rapids with frequent portages on rough and rocky ground. In order to ascertain how the boats would stand the strain to which they must of necessity be exposed, in such circumstances, four flat scows and two strong carvel boats were sent up, manded by 18 of the most experienced of the voyageurs and a company of soldiers. After seven days of unceasing toil they had only reached the Kaministaquia Bridge, some twenty miles by the road from Thunder Bay, and from thence to the Matawin Bridge, it was one continuous pull in flat and stony rapids. On arriving at the latter place, the boats, strong as they were, were found to have been sadly torn and scraped in the rapids, and had to be immediately placed in the hands of the builders for repairs. The scows having been built specially with a view to such work, were, of course, but little damaged.

If all the boats should be exposed to wreck in the channel of a river, for which they were never intended, there was reason to apprehend the most serious consequences as to the future progress of the expedition. We were but at the outset of the journey, and it was of the utmost importance that they should reach Shebandowan Lake, where the final embarkation was to take place, in good order. I therefore urged strongly upon the officer commanding the Field Force, the expediency of sending to Collingwood for waggons, where, as the sowing season was over, any number of farmers could be found ready enough to come forward with their teams. This advice was to a certain extent taken, and a limited number of waggons and horses were brought from that place, but the military teams began to fall off, as their drivers said, from starvation, being allowed but military rations. Some 60 of them were in hospital, and there were neither horses nor waggons to spare for the boats. Seeing therefore that there was nothing for it but the river, I sent voyageurs to improve the portages, and endeavoured to organize some system by which the boats might be in as far as possible saved from damage.

As the chief responsibility of getting forward the Expedition was thus thrown on the voyageurs, at a time when the impression was entertained in some quarters that it must be abandoned, I may be permitted, before proceeding further, to offer some remarks in regard to the men, from whom so much was expected, and by whose exertions a very different turn was soon given to the general prospect.

The men forming the voyageur force, had been engaged in various parts of the country, and comprised among their number, boatmen and canoemen, from the St. Maurice, the Saguenay, and the Ottawa. There were Iroquois from Caughnawaga, and Algonquins from the Lake of Two Mountains, Metis from Penetanguishene and Sault Ste. Marie, raftsmen from the Trent, and pure Indians from various points on Lake Superior. The following list shews the numbers and the localities whence they came:

Ottawa River	150 men.
St. Maurice and Saguenay Rivers	121 "
Penetanguishene, Manitoulin, and various points on Lake Huron	98 "
River Trent	114 "
St. Lawrence, Caughnawaga, and St. Regis	99 "
Lake Superior Indians, and Half Breeds	117 "
Toronto	6 "
	705 men.

The management and organization of such an assemblage, was, of course, a matter requiring great care and circumspection. I could not at once turn them over to the military. Two classes, utterly unacquainted with each other's habits and mode of life, had to be brought in contact. The one highly disciplined, but utterly inexperienced in the nature of the work to be undertaken; the other, rough, ready and inured to hardship, but holding all fixed rules and restraint in abhorrence. On the one hand was the soldier, accustomed to obey orders and cheerfully do whatever might be required of him, without troubling himself as to its object; on the other, the voyageur, generous and obliging, but in the habit of thinking and acting for himself; he, at least, would have his views about what he was to do, and how he should do it, and would, without meaning it, be very likely to give offence to those accustomed to unquestioning obedience.

Under these circumstances, and after fully weighing the matter in all its bearings, I conceived it better to keep the voyageurs, for a time at least, as much as possible apart from the military, and place them under officers accustomed to their management. I would thus have an opportunity of organizing them, discharging such as should prove inefficient, and replacing them from among the men on the works; and, by the time Shebandowan Lake was reached, would be in a position to man the boats with picked crews of the most skilful voyageurs to be found in the country.

The plan of dragging forward the boats by the rocky channel of the river having been determined on, and notwithstanding my remonstrance, persevered in, it remained for me to aid in carrying it out in the manner which, as I have said, would afford the greatest chance of safety to the boats; the rocky portages were laid with skids, and careful men were sent with every brigade whether manned by soldiers or voyageurs, or partly by both.

The following table shews the number of boats sent by the river to the Matawin bridge, or rather to Young's Landing, and how manned:

STATEMENT showing number of Boats sent from Thunder Bay by Kaministiquia River, and number of men engaged in forwarding them.

Date of Departure.	No. of Boats.	No. of Voyageurs.	No. of Soldiers.
1870.			
June 6	6	18	50
" 10	6	47	40
" 11	4	44	.....
" 14	9	51	40
" 20	6	45	.....
" 21	3	20	.....
" 21	3	30	.....
" 21	1	7	.....
" 22	4	44	.....
" 24	8	17	70
" 25	9	50	40
" 29	10	16	60
July 1	8	32	35
" 4	5	26	36
" 4	14	95	50
" 6	5	19	50
	101	556	471

From the point called "Young's Landing" for eight miles upwards, the river, as already explained, is exceedingly difficult. Soon after the arrival of the first brigade of boats at that point, the officer commanding the Field Force sent a number of soldiers, *unaccompanied by voyageurs*, under the command of a very active and energetic officer to try the passage, but after doing all that could be expected of inexperienced men and straining every nerve to get forward, they were obliged to return having been unable to get their boats up the rapids. Some interest had been excited by this experiment, which it was said was designed to show how much could be effected in the rapids independently of the voyageurs. Before the discouraging effects of this failure could spread far I had sent forward a band of voyageurs who took up the boats and, from that time forward, the boats, in this difficult section, were manned wholly by voyageurs. To get them all past the section just referred to, occupied a force of 120 men for upwards of a month and it had become necessary to spread so many people along the River, in this toilsome work of dragging boats up rocky channels that, much to my regret, I was compelled to reduce the force on the road. At this time (about the 20th of June) matters had become exceedingly critical. The Indians brought at great expense from Nipigon and the Grand Portage mostly left. The Fort William Indians, after a trip or two, deserted us. Fond as they are of voyaging, in the usual way, the work of dragging boats had become so distasteful to them that neither the agent of the Hudson Bay Company nor Mr. Choné, the missionary at Fort William, both of whom used their influence in our favor, could induce them to continue at it, and I became apprehensive that we should be without guides in the interior

Discontent, at the same time, began to manifest itself among a section of the other voyageurs. "Why" they said, do you keep us dragging boats over rocks where there is no water to float them, when a single waggon could accomplish more in a day then eight of us can in ten? By using waggons you would have your boats in good order; whereas, by exposing them to such usage as this, they are being rendered unfit for the long journey yet before us." The majority of them, however, kept cheerfully at their work and when defections took place I had still the force on the works from which to supply the loss. These men knew perfectly well that waggons in sufficient number could easily have been obtained, by simply sending for them. Appreciating this, their patience and endurance, under toil which they believed to be unnecessary and arising from a mistake, cannot be too highly commended.

As may be supposed, the boats suffered terribly, row-locks were lost, and oars in quanitity broken, and the tool chests were almost depleted of their contents.

Boat builders were, however, maintained at different points along the route, and as the strained and patched boats were brought forward they managed to repair and fit them for further trials.

Carpenters were set to work to make oars, the blacksmiths produced row-locks as fast as they could, and additional tools were ordered from Toronto.

By struggling on in this way the expedition was saved from disaster and those who were looking for an order to return were doomed to disapointment.

While the boats were being dragged thus tediously over the rocks of the Kamanistaquia and Matawin Rivers, operations were going forward on the road. The waggons, at first very limited in number, were gradually coming forward and stores were accumulating at the Matawin and Oskondagé. Except on two occasions, after days of heavy rain, the road as far as the Matawin Bridge, was kept in fair condition. From thence to the Oskondagé, it was in a bad state no doubt, but never so utterly bad but that a yoke of oxen, with a waggon, could take from eight to twelve hundred pounds weight over it, and horses with waggons, as well as oxen, passed frequently to that point.

The principal part of the workmen who remained at my disposal, over and above the numbers engaged in the channel of the river, were placed at convenient intervals along the route, west of the Matawin bridge. Several companies of the regular troops, were stationed, in the first instance, at various places requiring repair, east of that place, and were afterwards removed to Brownes lane and the section West of the Oskondagé. It must not be supposed, however, that we had the whole army at work on the roads. On the contrary, the main body of the Military Force remaind a. Thunder Bay, until after General Lindsay's visit, when they were moved forward to the Matawin.

The following statement shows the amount of work furnished by the Military.

STATEMENT of Amounts paid to Regulars and Volunteers for labor performed on the Thunder Bay Road.

1870.				$	cts.
June 5	To cash paid	Paymaster 60th Rifles, as per account receipt		210	25
" 9	do	Sergt. Curran and men	do	3	00
" 10	do	Lieut. Heneage, R.E.	do	19	12
" 10	do	Capt. Alleyn, R.A.	do	4	95
" 13	do	Paymaster 60th Rifles	do	139	62
" 20	do	do do	do	170	56
" 24	do	do 1st Ontario Battalion	do	23	62
" 30	do	do 60th Rifles	do	128	37
July 1	do	do 1st Ontario Rifles	do	4	12
" 14	do	do 60th Rifles	do	210	88
" 18	do	do do	do	206	50
" 23	do	do 1st Ontario Rifles	do	440	64
Nov. 16	do	Lieut.-Col. Casault, 2nd Battalion	do	268	25
				1,829	88

Of the above amount at least one third was for work about Thunder Bay and Brown's Lane, in sections the opening of which was of no advantage to the Road. Brown's Lane was a mere by-road, leading to the River, made to facilitate movements in connection with the scheme of dragging boats by hand, and at Thunder Bay a stockade was built and a road made between the military encampments—and on these a portion of the work above detailed was expended.—While pointing out the limited amount of work, that is, comparatively speaking, furnished by the Military on the roads, I cannot express myself in terms sufficiently appreciative of the valuable aid afforded by the few companies of the regular toops sent forward to our assistance.

The experience they had had on the fortifications at Quebec, rendered them quite expert at the use of the implements required, more especially, in grading, and their officers did what lay in their power to urge on the work.

It would give me pleasure to single out the names of those who were the longest associated with me in so arduous an undertaking; but, where all distinguished themselves and worked with equal earnestness, it might appear invidious. There are young men in Canada who would have derived a salutary lesson from witnessing the exertions both of officers and men. Young gentlemen, some of them heirs to broad acres and historic titles, did not disdain to lay their shoulders to charred logs nor think it unbecoming to look like their work. If, with such aid in that part of the work to which the soldiers were more particularly accustomed, I had had the hundreds of voyageurs absent on the River, as I had anticipated they would be, at my disposal, to send with their axes, along the western sections of the route, the road would quickly have been opened and boats and supplies might have passed by waggon to Shebandowan Lake.

The rains which prevailed throughout the greater part of June proved to be a serious drawback to operations generally. The section of the road,

more especially, between the Matawin Bridge and the Oskondagé running as it does through a region of red clay, became badly cut up, and a great deal of cross-lay (corduroy) became necessary—still the work went on, with but little interruption, until the occurrence of the great, and I believe unprecedented flood of the 30th June, which fairly stopped the passage of waggons for nearly two whole days—a culvert near the Kaministaquia was displaced and a small temporary bridge, which had been run over the Sunshine Brook, was seriously damaged while a similar temporary structure on the Oskondage had a narrow escape. These damages were quickly repaired and the work went on as usual

At this time, 30th of June, when the roads were at the very worst, and boats, broken and leaky were accumulated at Young's Landing or being hauled from thence to the Oskondagé, we had a visit from the Lieut.-General commanding the forces. This highly distinguished Officer went forward as far as Shebandowan Lake. The prospect was anything but encouraging, worse, in fact, than it had up to that time been, and I feared, as I had heard whispered some days previously, that the expedition was to be abandoned. Far otherwise was the result. His Excellency saw and judged of everything for himself. In two days from the date of his visit the head-quarters of the Field Force were moved forward to the Matawin Bridge. New energy seemed infused everywhere, additional companies of troops were sent to work on the roads, and among these the Volunteers from whom, up to this time, no aid had been received, except in making a few repairs in the vicinity of Thunder Bay. Bad as the roads were, waggon and Artillery found their way over them and stores began to accumulate at Ward's Landing. Shebandowan Lake was at last within reach and though the pelting rains came down at intervals the weather had upon the whole improved.

Ward's Landing is about three miles from Shebandowan Lake, and the River in this distance, presents a series of shallow, but not difficult rapids, so that the stores were easily sent forward in flat scows manned partly by voyageurs and partly by soldiers.

To facilitate the loading of boats and embarkation of troops at Shebandowan Lake a small wharf had been run out at a sandy bay, close to its outlet. At this place stores were rapidly collected and the boats, after their severe bruising in the Kaministaquia, put in order for the long journey to the West by boat builders who had been brought forward for the purpose.

Before proceeding further I may draw attention to the arrangements which had been made for the journey in boats.

On reference to the memorandum on a preceding page, it will be seen that it was proposed, in the first instance, to man every boat with three voyageurs besides soldiers, so that with each brigade of five boats there might be fifteen practised men available for running them over rapids. It was found, however, that although the boats would carry quite as much dead weight as had been anticipated, they had barely sufficient stowage capacity for the numerous articles to be put into them. I therefore recommended the Commanding Officer of the Field Force to make the number of boats, in each brigade, six instead of five. This was agreed to,

and it was furthermore arranged that the number of voyageurs accompanying each brigade should be twelve besides a pilot, making thirteen in all.

Shebandowan Lake to Fort Garry.

At sunset, on the evening of the 16th July, the Colonel Commanding the 60th Rifles (Col. Fielden) set out from McNeil's Landing, Shebandowan Lake, with a fleet of seventeen boats, and by ten a. m. on the following morning was at Kashaboiwe Portage.

This being the first detachment of the force which had embarked, I accompanied it for a short distance, in order to ascertain how the arrangements which had been made would meet the test of actual work on the portages. If I had had any apprehension on this head, it was quickly removed, for no sooner had Col. Fielden landed than with his officers, soldiers and voyageurs, he set vigorously to work to get the stores and artillery across. I had placed a force of voyageurs on this portage, a few days previously, to lay it with skids, that is logs laid transversely, to facilitate the passage of the boats. Taking some of these voyageurs with me, I proceeded to the Height of Land portage in order to make some necessary arrangements for getting the boats up a little brook which connects Kashaboiwe Lake with the summit pond, and having effected this, I returned on the following morning, to the Kashaboiwe Portage. In the meantime, Col. Fielden had made such good progress that all his stores and most of his boats were across, and in an hour or two he would set out for the Height of Land portage, and be over it on the evening of the following day.

These two portages, the Kashaboiwe and Height of Land, are the longest on the route, being, respectively, three quarters of a mile and a mile in length, equal to one fourth part of the aggregate length of the portages between Shebandowan Lake and Lake Winnepeg. If therefore Col. Fielden could, in two or three days, get over a fourth part of the entire distance to be ascomplished by land, it was easy to calculate, at least to a few days, the time at which the force would reach the Red River settlement, for the route if remarkable in so far as that between the portages there are no impediments to speak of, or difficult rapids to be encountered. With such a vigorous and active leader as Col. Fielden in advance, there could be, now, no doubt that the Expedition was a success.

As I was proceeding back to McNeil's Landing, I met a messenger with the following note, which will at least serve to shew how difficult it was for me to absent myself for a moment from the scene of principal operations, at this time.

Sunday afternoon, 4.45 P.M.

McNeil's Bay, Shebandowan Lake.

Dear Mr. Dawson,—I have been obliged to start off Capt. Buller's brigade without either voyageurs or guides, the former were ready, with exception of their cooking utensils, which had not turned up. Of the latter, Mr Graham knew nothing. I enquired of Mr. Hamel, and he told me there were no Mission Indians here. I have to look to you for both voyageurs and guides. This is only the second day of the operation, and y[illegible]

neither are ready. I have ordered Capt. Buller to halt on the first portage until I can send him both voyageurs and guides. Please send me word what I am to do. The carts are all here also, waiting for your men to take them on to the portages.

Very truly yours,

(Signed.) G. J. WOLSELEY.

S. J. Dawson, Esq.

I had been barely two days absent, and here matters were already in a mess. I at once furnished the brigade with a guide, from the crew I had with me, and soon afterwards met the voyageurs in a boat hurrying after them, so that, they had not to "halt on the first portage;" the men excused themselves by saying that as it was a Sunday evening, they did not know they were to be called on. I, however, took measures to prevent any ground arising for such complaints in the future.

At this time the voyageurs were by hundreds within easy reach of Shebandowan Lake, engaged in dragging boats to the Oskondagé, or in scows carrying stores from Ward's to McNiell's Landing, and had only to get warning to be in readiness at a moment's notice. But I had extreme difficulty in getting guides, the Indians as already shewn, having had enough of it in the rapids of the Kaministaquia. There could, however, be no difficulty in reaching the Height of Land Portage, with the aid of a map, and at the latter place, I had met some Indians who engaged to pilot the brigades in Lac des Mille Lacs, and soon afterwards a few of the Fort William Indians rejoined us. But, even among the Indians, there were few really well acquainted with the route. It had been long abandoned as a line of traffic, so that with the exception of such as had gone on voyages to Fort Frances—and the number was limited—it was known only to a few wandering families of hunters, and fortunately these came to our aid when most wanted.

On returning to the camp at Shebandowan Lake, I found Col. McNeill, V.C., most actively occupied in organizing the Force, arranging stores and sending off the boats. I had stationed at this place Mr. Graham, who displayed great energy in arranging the boat outfit, getting the boats repaired, and organizing and telling off the voyageurs for the different Brigades.

Rapid progress was now being made, Col. Fielden, in advance, was leading the way to the interior, and Col. McNeill, who evinced a most extraordinary faculty for eliminating order out of chaos, was sending off brigades as fast as stores and outfit arrived from Ward's Landing.

At this time waggons were coming through from Thunder Bay to Ward's Landing. The voyageurs were mostly on the river between Young's Landing and the Oskondage, but were bringing the boats rapidly forward, and a few additional Indians came up from the Mission to act as guides.

Matters being in this favorable position, I again went forward with a light canoe, and overtook Col. Fielden on the evening of the 26th July, at the Deux Rivières Portage; most of his stores and boats were already over,

and in eight days more he would be at Fort Frances. He had crossed the following portages.

	Miles.	Chains.
Kashaboiwe		60
Height of Land	1	
Barril Portage		16
Brulé Portage		20
French Portage		25
Pine Portage		30
Deux Rivières, nearly crossed		32
	3	23

Col. Fielden, with the advance, was now fairly over the most difficult section of the route. In nine days he had made a hundred miles, and crossed seven portages, the aggregate length of which was considerably over a third part of the total land carriage to be encountered, and he was now about entering on a large river, where the portages were short, and the route more open and frequented.

In order that this gallant officer's merit may be the better understood, it is but fair to explain, that when he set out from Shebandowan Lake, the most skilful of the voyageurs were still engaged with the boats in the channel of the Matawin. I had therefore to supply him with voyageurs, who, although strong and accustomed to roughing it in the woods, driving logs, and so forth, were, nevertheless, not considered equal to many of the others in the management of boats. But they were excellent axmen, and on them fell the work of opening the long abandoned portages between Lac des Mille Lacs and Sturgeon Lake, for the necessity of keeping so many men on the river, combined with the defection of the Indians, had prevented me from sending voyageurs very far in advance to improve the portages. I had, however, sent an additional number with Col. Fielden, over and above those required for his boats, to aid in this work, and on reaching Deux Rivières, I sent forward a crew of picked voyageurs to man the rapids on the Maligne, the next after Deux Rivières Portage, and at these rapids they remained until all the boats were run past.

Having made this arrangement, I again left Col. Fielden with the satisfaction of knowing that the Expedition was being virtually led by an officer fully equal to the task.

On 29th July, I was again at Shebandowan Lake, and there was now further work to be provided for, as will be seen from the following correspondence :

CAMP, WARD'S LANDING, 19th July, 1870.

SIR,—Referring to a conversation I had with you some days ago at the Matawin Camp, when I told you that upon trial the boats would not hold so much as I had been led to expect, I have the honor to inform you that I acted upon the suggestion you then made of sending an extra boat with each brigade. By doing so and by having only two voyageurs in each boat, I have been able to take 60 days rations for each brigade, with every one embarked in it.

I shall have 21 brigades as far as Fort Frances and 20 from there to

Fort Garry; up to the former place, I shall therefore require 126 boats and from thence on, only 120.

As by this arrangement I shall make use of 252 voyageurs, I have to request you will kindly inform me whether you can send forward the supplies noted in the margin to Fort Frances, after the last detachment of troops have embarked at Shebandowan Lake, by means of the boats and voyageurs left behind, and if so, the date when I may depend upon having them at that post,

I have to add that the sooner they can be sent there the better, as it is important that I should have this reserve close behind me when I enter the Province of Manitoba.

I have the honor to be,
&c., &c., &c.,

(Signed,) G. J. WOLSELEY,
Commanding Red River Field Force.

S. J. DAWSON, Esq.,
&c, &c., &c.,
Supt. Public Works.

WARD'S LANDING NEAR SHEBANDOWAN LAKE,

20th July, 1871.

SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, and, in reply, beg leave to say that, with the boats and voyageurs to be left at my disposal, I can send forward the supplies you mention from this place to Fort Frances by the 15th day of September next.

The following will be required for rations to the voyageurs while engaged in this service.

150 half brls. pork, 150 half brls flour, 40 bags peas or beans, 7 chests tea. The boats now remaining at Thunder Bay will of course be brought to this place by the military transport. I would also require the use of six yoke of oxen for transport on the portages, with a quantity of hay, oats or ox feed proportioned to the time they should be so used.

I have the honor to be,
&c., &c., &c.,

(Signed,) S. J. DAWSON.

Col. WOLSELEY,
Commanding Red River Field Force.

I may here remark that instead of 252 men, the expedition was accompanied by 315 voyageurs, besides 185 engaged with reserve stores.

The arrangement, above detailed, having been agreed to, as soon as the last brigade of boats with soldiers had left McNiell's Landing, the reserve stores began to be sent forward from Thunder Bay. A number of boats which had been left at that place were also brought up by waggon, and it now became evident to all, that much time would have been gained and

labour saved, in the first instance, by keeping the whole voyageur force on the road making it at once practicable to waggons, getting a sufficient number of these from Collingwood and bringing forward boats and stores to Ward's Landing. To shew how easily this might have been done, I may call attention to the fact that at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of 2nd August, seven boats, placed on waggons, were sent off from Thunder Bay, and, at sunset on the following evening, were at Ward's Landing. How different was this from dragging them over rocks and stones in the bottom of a shallow stream. There was not a boat brought by the river that cost less for transport than $300, making on a hundred which were so conveyed some $30,000, while on 53 brought by waggon the cost did not exceed $20 or $25 each; and then how very different was the condition of the boats, in the one case fresh and sound as they came from the hand of the builder. In the other torn and broken with many row-locks, oars and rudders lost or smashed, and requiring repairs, in some cases very extensive ones, before they could be used.

The military having all left, arrangements were quickly made for sending forward the reserve supplies. In this work a small steam launch which had been prepared at Toronto, did good service. It was first used on Shebandowan Lake, but as the supplies were moved on, it was taken to Lac des Mille Lacs, and it saved the work of at least twenty men. With three full loaded boats in tow, it made fair speed, and was only on one or two occasions wind bound, for a short time. I may dismiss this subject by saying, that by means of the voyageurs left behind, the stores were taken in good time to Fort Frances. The first reaching that place on the 3rd of September, and the last on the 17th, besides some that were left by order of the military at Deux Rivières Portage, to meet the troops as they returned from Red River.

While the military are on the way to Red River and the reserve stores following, a brief description of the line of the route, as regards its general features, may not be out of place.

Between the terminus of the Thunder Bay road, on Shebandowan Lake, and Lake Winnipeg, by the route followed by the expedition, the distance is, in round numbers, 488 miles. In this distance are three sections differing materially in general character.

The first, known as the Lake Region, commences at the end of the Thunder Bay road and ends at Fort Frances. The distance between these points by the route followed by the expedition, which went round by Loon Lake to avoid the rapids of Sturgeon River, is 208 miles, and by the more direct route usually travelled, about 190 miles. This section presents a continuous succession of lakes separated by short portages, except in one instance where there is a stretch of eleven miles of river, sometimes called the Maligne. It was to the rapids in this stretch that I had sent a picked crew of voyageurs to be in attendance while the boats were passing, and run them down. In all other places, the work to be done consisted merely in carrying baggage and supplies, and hauling boats from one quiet sheet of water to another. The aggregate length of the portages between Shebandowan Lake and Fort Frances is precisely three miles and 76 chains;

the two first are the longest namely, Kashaboiwe and Height of Land portages, and these are respectively three-quarters of a mile and one mile in length. The other portages are very short, only three exceeding a quarter of a mile, and none extending to half a mile. Here then is the labour the voyageurs and soldiers had to encounter in getting to Fort Frances, that is to say—they had to get boats, ammunition, and 60 days' rations, the latter gradually getting less, over three miles and 76 chains of land, and row or sail through some two hundred miles of water, where countless islands rendered the shelter so perfect that the highest winds could not stop them, while the breeze would often fill their sails and relieve them from the toil of the oar. The weight of the boats varied somewhat, those of the clinker construction being from 650 lbs., to 750 lbs., and the carvel from 850 to 950 lbs. With each brigade of six boats were from sixty-five to seventy-five strong men, soldiers and voyageurs, ten men were quite equal to drawing a boat across a portage, but the crews joined together and hauled them across with great ease. The baggage and stores gave the most irksome work to the inexperienced soldiers, but it did not last long at a time, and after the toil involved in getting across a portage, they were soon again afloat and winding their way among labyrinths of islands.

Sometimes mistakes occurred on the lakes, more especially when the sails were hoisted.

The boats in tacking, would leave the usual track and, as new lakes opened up and unknown islands came in view, the guides would get bewildered and scarcely know which way to turn. A case of this kind occurred in the Lac des Mille Lacs, and I mention it to show how easy it is for the best guides to get astray in these island-studded lakes. A half Indian voyageur who had been for many years in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and was supposed to know every rock between Lake Superior and the Arctic Seas, came with a brigade of boats to the lake just named. The wind was up, the sails were set at once, and off went the boats dashing at great speed through the water, and leaving island after island behind them. The wind was nearly but not quite fair, and it would be a pity to change them from their track while they were making such speed, *almost* in the direction they should go. At last they were put about, but the guide looked in vain for some point or island he could recognize. All was new to him. Time and again, the islands bounding the prospect were made for, but only to open up new vistas and lakes more bewildering than the last. This lake is well named Lac des Mille Lacs. It is, however, the only one on the upper part of the route which from its dimensions could admit of the boats going far astray, and in order to guard against the recurrence of such blunders, I stationed some Indians who have their hunting grounds in the neighbourhood, at the Height of Land, so that they might be in readiness to act as pilots in this perplexing lake.

Much has been said about the barrenness and forbidding aspect of the Lake region, and no doubt it is in many places somewhat rocky, but not more so than the regions of the Upper Ottawa, or the country intermediate between the Ottawa and the Georgian Bay. Timber, both red and white pine, of fair dimensions, is in unlimited abundance, and in many places, more especially on Rainy Lake, there are indications of valuable minerals.

Arrived at Fort Frances, the Expedition had before it 131 miles of unbroken navigation, ending at Rat Portage. First, Rainy River, winding for 67 miles with a gentle current through forests of the most luxuriant growth, broken here and there by slopes of green sward, where the Indians of former times had practised the art of cultivation, so long forgotten to their descendants, and then the Lake of the Woods, where the course lay for 64 miles farther through islands which, although the lake is large, afford sheltered channels where the stiffest breeze is hardly felt. There is, however, a traverse of seven miles at the entrance of the lake where boats are sometimes wind bound.

The Winnipeg.

On reference to the memorandum on a preceding page, it will be seen that this river presents a series of lake-like reaches with short intervals of rapid water between them. It is in volume not inferior to the Ottawa—perhaps greater, after it receives its chief tributary the English River which joins it just above Portage de L'Ile from the east. Some of the navigable sections are like the Chats and Duchene Lakes on the Ottawa, differing only in the circumstance of being full of islands. This river had long been used as a highway for the boats of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the carrying places were found to be well opened and in good order. At certain stages of the water some of the portages are difficult of approach, but when the expedition passed the water was low, and the worst places had quite lost their terrors. The distance from Rat Portage at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods to Fort Alexander on Lake Winnipeg is one hundred and forty-nine miles. The portages are numerous but short; their aggregate length at high water amounting only to three miles and six chains. The water, however, was so low when the Expedition passed that at several places, such as the Cave, the Seven Portages and Silver Falls, much of the land carriage was avoided by keeping in the bed of the river and lifting the boats over rocky points. Upon the whole, the Expedition experienced no difficulty whatever on the Winnipeg. Guides had been obtained at Fort Frances and Rat Portage, where the Indians are numerous, and some few of the voyageurs who had not distinguished themselves, were sent back from the former station and their places supplied with Indians well acquainted with the route. I should mention that Mr. Boyd, a merchant in the Red River Settlement, and now a member of the Government of Manitoba, together with some other settlers, sent six Hudson's Bay boats to meet the Expedition. This afforded an opportunity of comparing these boats with those which had been provided in Ontario and Quebec, and I have some satisfaction in saying that the latter proved to be the fastest sailers, the most easily managed in the portages and rapids and in every way the best adapted to the purposes of the Expedition.

From Fort Alexander to Lower Fort Garry (Stone Fort) the distance is 60 miles, and in this section there is no impediment whatever to the navigation.

The route, generally, between the terminus of the Thunder Bay road, Shebandowan Lake and Lake Winnipeg, will compare very favorably with any other canoe or boat route of equal length in British North America. The entire distance is four hundred and eighty-eight miles, with some forty

portages (more or less according to the stage of water) having an aggregate length of seven miles. Between these portages, the navigation, excepting for a few miles in a narrow brook at French Portage, is the easiest conceivable. There are no difficult rapids to run. In fact, except on the Maligne already referred to, and at a few places on the Winnipeg, as regards the facility of getting over them with boats or canoes, the rapids are the merest ripples.

The force, in getting through, had just seven miles of land carriage to get over with light boats, 60 days' rations gradually diminishing, and their ammunition, and this in short sections, so far separated as to make the fatigue less than it would have been had the portages been longer and fewer in number.

The labor on the portages was, no doubt, trying to men unaccustomed to such work, but it did not last long at a time, and all besides was the smoothest sailing conceivable.

Let, now, the route which could afford such easy transport be compared with other known routes of similar character, on which many Canadians are engaged in occupations involving the constant practice of work of the same nature as that which the Expeditionary Force had to perform, and first, as regards the Ottawa, it is not necessary to refer to the time when articles had to be carted from Carillon to Grenville, when voyageurs had to portage their canoes past the Chaudiere and Duchene, struggle up the Chats Rapids and toil for weeks in powerful whirlpools or on the long portages between the Chineux and the Calumet. The labor involved in getting from the Joachim, the upper limit of steam navigation, to Lake Temiscaminque, a distance of a hundred and twenty miles, is vastly greater than on the whole route to Red River,—a greater length of land carriage, and rapids more powerful and difficult to overcome. But, if the difficulties on the broad Ottawa are greater, how much more are they not so on its tributaries the Gatineau, Madawaska, Coulonge or Petawawa. Hundreds, I may say thousands of adventurous lumbermen yearly find their way to the high regions drained by these rivers with boats and half a year's supplies besides.

The St. Maurice is, perhaps, one of the most difficult rivers on the continent, running down, as it does, directly across the strike of rock from a plateau fifteen hundred feet above the level of the St. Lawrence, and it forms a case in point as regards comparison, for by this route a French Military Expedition passed, in former years, to the Moose and down that River to Hudson's Bay, with artillery and munitions of war. Two of their field pieces still remain on a portage at the sources of the St. Maurice, and history tells of their doings at Hudson's Bay, where they took and held forts, one of which was well mounted with artillery. Although no doubt greater things have been done in other ways, still this is of its kind a feat as yet unparalleled in military annals.

The Chevalier de Troyes had no boats such as were supplied to the Red River Expeditionary Force, and in his day the birchen skiff was alone used on the inland waters, between the St. Lawrence and Hudson's Bay.

As compared with the route by York Factory, the line followed by the Expedition has many evident advantages, and, in this regard, I may refer to a journey made from York Factory to Fort Garry by Col. Crofton in

1846. That gallant soldier, whose clear and comprehensive evidence given before a Committee of the House of Commons (England), in 1857, did so much to remove the veil in which an exclusive monopoly had shrouded the regions of the North West, came by York Factory to Red River, with 347 soldiers, 17 women and 19 children, in all 383 persons. Among his munitions of war were three 6-pounders and one 9-pounder-field pieces. In his evidence, speaking of the Fort William route, he says :—"I would undertake to take my regiment by it;" and, on being further questioned, replied as follows :—

"I did worse than that, for I took artillery from Fort York, in Hudson's "Bay, to Red River, 700 miles by the compass, over lakes and rivers, and "that is a *much worse route than the other*."

"Do you mean to say that under present circumstances (this was 13 "years ago), the route from Fort William to Fort Garry is a better route for "military to go than from Fort York?—I am quite sure of it for I have "gone both."

"Question by Sir John Packington—Did you say you took artillery "from Fort York to Red River?—I did."

"What distance is that?—It is about 736 miles."

"How did you convey it?—We carried the guns in canvass, we took "the guns off their carriages, we had rope handles and carrying straps, and "between them so carried the guns."

At the time the gallant Crofton formed the opinions to which he has given such forcible expression, steam had not reached Lake Superior, and the Thunder Bay road had not been dreamt of; still, with experience of both routes, he considered it (the Fort William road), vastly better than the route by Hudson's Bay.

One cannot but be struck with the marked difference in the circumstance, under which he made his journey by the one route, and those attending the advance of the Expeditionary force by the other. In the one case were the ever frozen shores of Hudson's Bay, and soldiers, with artillery, and women with children to bring forward to an unknown land by a route till then untried by a military force. In the other, light boats, fitted with everything that could be conceived to be useful, and manned with active men in the very prime of life.

Women and children had to be protected from the chill blasts of autumn, as Col. Crofton's band came upwards from the sea.

The soldiers of the Expeditionary force had to work hard enough at times, no doubt, on the portages, as they came to the successive falls of the Winnipeg, but they were soon again on open lakes with the soft winds of summer in their sails.

A quarter of a century ago, Col. Crofton's soldiers could have had nothing to cheer them save a consciousness of doing their duty, as they advanced. The land before them had been represented as sterile and shrouded for more than half the year in the gloom of a Siberian winter.

As the Expeditionary force went on, the soldiers knew that they were taking part in a movement to become historical, that they were, in fact, carrying the sceptre of their Queen to a land of sunshine and fertility, and of proportions so vast that it might hold the half of Europe in its lap.

The Red River Settlement.

To understand proceedings at this place it may be well to explain that before leaving Thunder Bay, the Col. commanding the Expeditionary field force had written as I also did to the officer representing the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Garry, requesting him to place a force of workmen on the Lake of the Woods road, so that it might be available for the return, if not for the advance, of the troops.

The following are copies of the letters so addressed, from Thunder Bay, General Lindsay being there at the time :

(Copy)

PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING,

THUNDER BAY, 30th June, 1870.

SIR,—With reference to the proclamation I have forwarded to you in a letter of this date, I have the honor to inform you that I am most anxious that steps should be immediately taken for opening out a cart road from the end of Mr. Snow's road to the north-west corner of the Lake of the Woods.

It is not necessary that the road should be of a permanent character, as it will only be required this year for military purposes, hereafter it could be enlarged and made fit for commercial traffic, but now a corduroyed track over the swamps, wide enough and strong enough for the passage of Red River carts (lightly loaded), would answer our purposes.

Mr. Dawson, who represents the Public Works Department here, will forward more fully detailed instructions regarding the construction of the road required, and will authorize you to appoint a surveyor to superintend and direct the work and to make the necessary disbursements.

I have to request that you will kindly render the gentlemen you employ upon this service every possible assistance while so engaged

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed), G. J. WOLSELEY,
Commanding Red River Expeditionary Force.

To the officer representing
The Hudson Bay Company,
Fort Garry.

(Copy)

GOVERNMENT DEPOT,

THUNDER BAY, 30th June, 1870.

SIR,—Under existing circumstances, it is desirable that the road to the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods should be opened in such a way as to be practicable to carts without delay, and it has occurred to me that you might find some reliable and energetic person in your section who would be willing to undertake the work.

What is required is a track over which carts can be driven from the

end of the road, already opened, to the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods.

Before a complete road can be made, it is always necessary to open a cart track or ox road, over which supplies can be drawn while the work progresses, and it is a preliminary cart track of this kind which is at present required.

The total distance remaining to be opened is about thirty miles. In the dry sections it would only be necessary to clear off the wood and grub out the roots. In swampy places cross laying (corduroy) or fascining would be required. The person you employ would of course understand the amount of work necessary to form a track over which a cart could pass.

Should you find anyone willing to undertake this work and able to perform it, the Department of Public Works of Canada will pay for the labor and necessary supplies.

The Commander of the Military Force, now on the way to the Red River settlement, has also written you on this subject.

I have the honor to be,
&c., &c., &c.
(Signed), S. J. DAWSON.

J. H. McTavish, Esq.,
The Hudson Bay Co.,
Fort Garry.

Mr. McTavish describes his action in this matter as follows:

"Enclosed herewith you will find copy of Colonel Wolesley's letter to me.

"On its receipt, I issued notices in the Colonel's name, calling for men "to commence the work, and went myself through the English portion of "the settlement, but failed in getting a single English half-breed or "Swampy. None but French half-breeds offered, though it was given out "and well understood, that the road was to be pushed through in order to "hurry in Her Majesty's troops.

"(Signed), J. H. MCTAVISH."

The reluctance of the English half-breeds to join in the work, is explained by the fact that the road starts from the French settlement, and there was some feeling of distrust still existing between the two parties. If, however, the French were the first to run to open the roads, which they believed necessary to the advance of the troops, the English had at the same time sent boats to meet the Expedition. All parties were thus doing their best to facilitate its approach, and when it came its appearance was hailed by all with equal pleasure.

The policy of the Government, and the action of the Dominion Parliament, had disarmed the malcontents, and many of those who had taken part in the insurrection, were out, with no more formidable weapons than hatchet and shovel, making a road for Her Majesty's troops.

The Expeditionary Force on its arrival, was received everywhere with open arms. The people were quietly following their usual occupations,

and the insurgent leader who had remained in Fort Garry, with some thirty men, went leisurely out as the troops marched in.

Peace reigned everywhere, and the Colonel commanding the Expeditionary Force was in a position to address the troops in the following strain:

"From Prince Arthur's Landing to Fort Garry, is over 600 miles "through a wilderness of forest and water, where no supplies of any de- "scription are obtainable. You had to carry on your backs a vast amount "of supplies, over no less than 47 portages, making a total distance of seven "miles, a feat unparalleled in our military annals. You have descended a "great river, esteemed so dangerous from its rapids, falls and whirlpools, "that none but experienced voyageurs attempt its navigation. Your "cheerful obedience to orders has enabled you, under the blessing of "Divine Providence, to accomplish your task without any accident.

"Although the banditti who had been oppressing this people, fled at "your approach, without giving you an opportunity of proving how men "capable of such labor could fight, you have deserved as well of your "country as if you had won a battle."

This is no doubt very eloquent, and the soldiers deserved all that could be said in their praise, but as it occurs in a document, which will doubtless be placed on record, I must protest against its being accepted as a correct representation of the state of matters existing in the Red River Settlement, when the troops arrived.

The people to whom he alludes instead of flying at his approach, like banditti, were quietly following their usual occupations, except those who were out, at his particular request, making a road to facilitate the movements of Her Majesty's troops, and the soldiers had had experienced guides on the Winnipeg, although the contrary is implied.

A little latitude should, no doubt, be allowed under the circumstances; but, with all due allowances, I may be permitted to enter a mild protest against a river which has formed the highway of the white man since he first made his appearance in these regions, being called so difficult from its falls, whirlpools and rapids that none but experienced voyageurs attempt its navigation. Why! men, women and children have passed by hundreds up and down the Winnipeg, and the boats of the Hudson's Bay Company, some of them the most unwieldy tubs imaginable, are constantly used on its waters. In former times, the whole trade of the northern parts of the continent passed by the Winnipeg. The French first used it as a highway; succeeding them came the great north west company of Canada, who also followed it, and, at a later day, when the Hudson Bay Company had its Head Quarters on the Albany, the route to the Saskatchewan was by way of LacSeul and the Winnipeg. Whatever may be said of other parts of the route, the Winnipeg was at least a well known and long travelled highway, presenting remarkable facilities for boats.

As a case in point, I may draw attention to the fact, that, at the very time the Expeditionary Force was passing, two frail and poorly manned canoes, the one occupied by a very fat newspaper editor, and the other by a gentleman who had his wife with him, passed over all the rapids, portages and whirlpools of the Winnipeg without its occurring to their occupants that they were doing anything extraordinary.

The Barracks and Buildings at Fort Garry.

Being quite inadequate to the accommodation of so large a number, it became necessary to provide other buildings, a matter which the scarcity of material, arising from the disturbed state of affairs for some time previously existing in the Settlement, rendered difficult

The following correspondence will serve to explain the action taken.

(Copy)

Fort Garry, August 31st, 1870.

Sir,—I have been instructed by the Lieutenant-General commanding in British North America, to make arrangements for housing the two Battalions of Militia in this Settlement.

7 Captains.
14 Subalterns.
5 Staff Sergeants.
28 Sergeants.
7 Buglers.
315 Rank and File.

Mr. Donald Smith has placed all the buildings that can be spared by the Hudson Bay Company in the Upper and Lower Forts at my disposal for that purpose. Some alterations are required to fit them up as barracks, and a few small buildings have to be erected to serve as cook and wash-houses, &c.

1 Commanding Officer.
1 Field Officer.
1 Chaplain.
4 Staff Officers.
—(Regimental.)
2 Control do.

The strength of each battalion is as per margin. One will be quartered at the upper, the other at the lower Fort.

In the Lower Fort there will not be any Control Officers.

The scarcity of labor, which has always been hitherto the chief difficulty in carrying out any works here, will not be felt in providing these buildings, as the services of all the officers and men of these two battalions are available, and from their ranks numerous skilled mechanics can be obtained.

As all the expenses incurred are to be defrayed by the Dominion Government, I conceive it to be very essential that an officer representing the Public Works Department of Canada, should carry out all the works required, or, having arranged with the Hudson Bay Company for their execution, should exercise a supervision over them whilst in progress.

As you are an officer of high position in that department, I have therefore the honor to request your assistance, and that, should your views coincide with mine upon this subject, you will have the goodness to act on the part of the Public Works Department, and appoint some efficient officer to take charge of fitting up the barracks required.

Enclosed is a rough outline of the various services required in both Forts.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant.

(Signed,) G. J. Wolseley, Colonel,
Commanding Red River Expedition.

To S. J. Dawson, Esquire,
Public Works Department,
Fort Garry.

FORT GARRY, 5th September, 1870.

SIR,—In continuation of my letter to you of the 31st ultimo, I have now the honor to forward you rough specifications of the work required at both forts to fit them for the occupation of troops.

Of course, as the work progresses, many details not given in these papers, will have to be attended to. These will be pointed out by the Lieut.-Colonels commanding the two battalions, to whatever officer you place in charge of the work.

I should feel much obliged if you could give me a statement as to what may be the prospect of getting these services carried out before the severe weather sets in, before say the 1st November or thereabouts.

It is perhaps superfluous to inform you, that housing of the Militia here is of a public importance that should take precedence of every other public work.

The Lieut. Governor authorises me to add that he concurs in this opinion.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

(Signed,) G. J. WOLSELEY, Colonel,
Commanding Red River Expeditionary Force.

S. J. Dawson, Esq.,
Public Works Department,
Fort Garry.

(Copy.)

WINNIPEG, RED RIVER SETTLEMENT, 5th September, 1870.

SIR,—In reference to your letters of the 31st ultimo and 5th instant, I beg to say that all that it is possible to do will be done towards carrying out the work you mention.

I have already ordered the purchase of all the lumber to be procured in the settlement, and have entered into communication with the manager of a small saw mill at Pembina, in the hope of obtaining an additional quantity.

Other necessary material, such as nails, glass, &c., have been ordered from St. Cloud, and the carpenters, now on the line of route between Fort Frances and Lake Superior, have been sent for.

The difficulty of finding skilled labor and the scarcity of material in this remote section must occasion delay, but I trust, nevertheless, to have the work well on before the severe weather sets in.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant.

(Signed,) S. J. DAWSON.

Colonel Wolseley,
Commanding Red River Expeditionary Force,
Fort Garry.

The Carpenters who had proved themselves so useful at putting up store houses and stables along the route between Thunder Bay and Shebandowan Lake soon arrived in the settlement and set actively to work. By the 5th day of October the troops were all in shelter, and before the severe weather set in, the recreation rooms, specified by Colonel Wolseley, were in readiness, besides various other buildings.

The boats, as will be seen from the following correspondence, were turned over to me and I had them put in safety for the winter. Sixty-five boats, most of them in fair order, remain at Fort Garry :—

(Copy.)

FORT GARRY, 7th September, 1870.

SIR,—I have the honor, by direction of the Colonel commanding, to request you will be good enough to inform him whether you are prepared at once to take over the boats and equipments, no longer required for the purposes of the Expedition, and now lying at the lower Fort and in the Assiniboine River here.

Should you wish to leave them in the vicinity of the troops, Colonel Wolseley will order that the necessary guards be placed over them for their protection, and would request in that case that you will allow the officers commanding the regiments the use of such boats as they may wish for recreation of the officers and men.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed,) W. B. IRVINE,
Assistant Controller.

S. J. Dawson, Esq.,
&c., &c., &c.,
Fort Garry.

(Copy.)

WINNIPEG, RED RIVER SETTLEMENT, 7th September, 1870.

SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date and, in reply thereto, beg leave to say that I shall within a few days be prepared to take over the boats and boat equipment no longer required for the purposes of the Expedition, and now lying at the lower Fort and in the Assiniboine River.

The boats will be hauled up in the vicinity of the force and put in safety from floods and weather, and when thus secured, it would certainly be advisable that they should be placed in charge of the troops.

The officers commanding regiments can, of course, have the use of such boats as they wish for the recreation of the officers and men.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed,) S. J. DAWSON.

Col. Irvine,
Assistant Controller, &c.,
Fort Garry.

LAKE OF THE WOODS ROAD.

As already explained, Mr. McTavish, the resident Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, at the request both of the Commandant of the Field Force and the Manager of the Public Works, conveyed to him by letters (copies of which are on a preceding page) from Thunder Bay, had set a force to work on the Lake of the Woods road.

The distance remaining to be opened was found to be somewhat greater than the confused reports, received up to that time, had led us to anticipate. The party sent out with Mr. Snow, in the fall of 1868, had not even penetrated to the Lake of the Woods, with their Exploratory lines, and much of the road they had opened was a mere preliminary track, on which nothing more had been done than cutting down or rolling off the trees. On this Section the people employed by Mr. McTavish were making bridges over the swamps; they had also opened a road from the point at which Mr. Snow's road terminates, East of White Mouth River to Birch River, and from thence had cut a bridle path to the Lake of the Woods, but it was mostly through swamp, and horses could with difficulty be taken over it with pack saddles. By this route, a company of the Regular troops, on their return, went from Fort Garry to the North West angle of the Lake of the Woods, where they embarked in boats, and a company of Volunteers which had been stationed at Fort Frances, took the same road from the North West Angle to Fort Garry.

The Commandant of the Field Force left Fort Garry on the 10th September and passed by land to the Lake of the Woods, where his canoe with a crew of active voyageurs, was in waiting to carry him to Lake Superior.

The Return of the Regular Troops and Voyageurs

Was marked by the same good fortune as had attended the advance of the Force from Shebandowan Lake to Fort Garry. The voyageurs who had accompanied the Volunteers were now disengaged, so that there was no lack of skilful boatmen and the journey to Lake Superior was rapidly accomplished, under the able management of Colonel Fielden. The weather was delightful and the flies had vanished. In fact, throughout the Summer, to whatever cause it may have been owing, there was a remarkable absence of troublesome insects.

To the soldiers the homeward journey must have been pleasant. The boats were light and better manned than they had been on the advance, and it would be difficult to imagine anything more beautiful than the Rivers, Falls and Island-studded Lakes, by which they passed. Autumn had just begun to tinge the forests and the wether was all that could be desired. The Expedition had been entirely successful and they were returning to receive the well merited thanks of the Country and their Sovereign.

The average rate per day, notwithstanding all impediments in the way of portages, or rapids, was about 25 miles, some days much more and some less. Waggons were in waiting for the luggage at Shebandowan Lake and the terrible Thunder Bay Road, which had been greatly improved

during the absence of the troops, was but two days easy march. This shows how readily it might have been passed at first, if the Voyageurs, instead of being set to dragging boats by the River, had been kept for a time at work on it.

Many of the voyageurs, at their own request, were paid off at Fort Garry. They had been struck with the beauty of the country and the fertility of the soil, and I have no doubt will prove a valuable addition to the population.

I was detained for some time in making necessary arrangements for the construction of barracks, and the progress of the work on the Lake of the Woods road, and only left the north-west angle on the 23rd of September. I reached Thunder Bay on the 1st October, and in a few days saw the last of the regular troops embark on the steamers: officers and men had alike distinguished themselves by unflinching perseverence, perfect sobriety, and all the good qualities which mark the British soldier. A feeling of regard had grown up between them and the voyageurs, and for the latter I can say that they parted with the tried friends who had shared their toils, with regret, and with a heart felt wish for their future prosperity and happiness.

The steamers having been fully freighted with military stores, &c., the voyageurs could only leave Thunder Bay on the succeeding trips. They reached their homes in safety, and it is satisfactory to know that not a single serious accident occurred, and not a life was lost, from the outset of the Expedition until its return.

The Expedition having been attended with success, I would gladly close this report without referring to blunders which might have led, and very nearly did lead, to an opposite result; but so much has been said and written of a character to produce an impression, the reverse of the truth, that justice to the men by whose perseverance and toil it was mainly saved from disaster, compels me to draw attention to certain circumstances which I should otherwise have left unnoticed.

I have already shewn that, on the arrival of the first detachment of the military force at Thunder Bay, the road for twenty-five miles was in such condition that boats and military stores might at once be sent forward as far as Matawin Bridge. I have also pointed out that any deficiency in the means of transport, occasioned by the detention of a portion of that which had been provided (drawing stores over the portage road), at Sault Ste. Marie, might easily have been remedied by sending to Collingwood or the settlements in its vicinity for additional horses and waggons

Soon after the arrival of the first of the troops, twenty-eight horses were taken by waggon over the road to the Matawin Bridge, thus proving that it was not only practicable but quite easy to send them in that way.

In this position, the true plan would have been to set all the available force, both soldiers and voyageurs, to work on the unfinished section of the road, so as to have it completed by the time the stores should reach the Matawin Bridge. But instead of adopting a line of action, so obvious and judicious, the boats, on the advice of inexperienced persons, who, although living in the vicinity, had never been over the country through which the road passes, or had ever so much as seen Shebandowan Lake, were ordered to the rough and rocky channel of the river, while at the same time with ex-

ception of a few companies of the regular troops, sent forward to aid in repairing the damage occasioned by the fire, the main body of the military force was maintained in inactivity at Thunder Bay, and there it in great part remained, until General Lindsay made his appearance and ordered a general movement forward.

I have already described the operation of dragging the boats over the rocks of the Kaministiquia and Matawin, and the damage to which they were thereby subjected.

The voyageurs knew the work and privations to which they were thus exposed, to be unnecessary. They saw that a few additional waggons, only, were required to relieve them from the toil, and save the boats on which the success of the Expedition depended. They were, indeed accompanied sometimes by the soldiers, who did a portion of the dragging as far as the Matawin Bridge, but the soldiers never returned on a second excursion of the same nature, while the voyageurs had to tramp back again to Thunder Bay, and renew the work; and in the difficult sections between Young's Landing and Brown's Lane, the soldiers could not aid at all. Most of the native Indian voyageurs, brought at great expense to the ground, and whose services would have been invaluable as guides, became, as I have already explained, disheartened and left. The Nipigon Indians deserted in a body. Those from Fort William and the Grand Portage could not endure the toil, and their places had to be filled with men from among the workmen on the road; under these circumstances, I think I am justified in claiming some little credit for the voyageurs, who, in storm and sunshine, stood manfully to their posts, and compelled success against blunders, which would otherwise have resulted in disaster.

If, under the great trials to which they were so unnecessarily exposed, any considerable number of them had left, the Expedition could not have proceeded, the route would have been proclaimed impracticable, and the North-West Territories might possibly have been lost to Canada. That so great a national calamity was averted, and that the first considerable Expedition which the Dominion sent forth, has been crowned with success, is in no small measure due to the perseverance, the skill and unwavering constancy of the voyageurs. They were of that class which has, perhaps, done more than any other to advance the prosperity of the country.

Of such as they were are the men who are yearly engaged in the adventurous work of carrying the produce of the forest, or rather the forests themselves, along the rivers of the country. Their calling may perhaps be considered a humble one, but that is no reason why, when they perform important public services, and do great things, they should be utterly ignored and their hard won laurels snatched from them and placed on the brows of others.

In giving credit to the voyageurs for their services, I am very far from wishing to disparage the work of the soldiers. On the contrary, I can most cheerfully bear testimony to their aptitude in acquiring a knowledge of the voyageurs art, their unvarying preservence and orderly behaviour. The soldiers are far more likely to suffer from the indiscreet remarks of those who assume to speak for them than from anything I have said.

The tendency of exaggerated statements is to produce an impression the opposite of that which they are intended to convey, and whatever may

be said to the contrary, no one having experience of such matters, will believe that it needed four hundred regular troops who, whatever their good qualities might be, were strangers to the country and the manner of travelling in it, to carry treble their number of Canadians, voyageurs and volunteers, though the forests of their native country.

And, after all, what has been done? With every appliance which the country could command, magnificent steamers on Lakes Huron and Superior, good horses and waggons for the land roads, boats in every way adapted to the navigation of inland waters, and so light as to be easily transported on portages, with voyageurs to man them, well skilled and accustomed to their work, the Expedition made its way to the Red River Settlement.

The road by which it travelled had been much used in former years. It was a link in the route by which the French, nearly two hundred years ago, carried the flag of their country to the plains of the Saskatchewan, and it was for many years the highway of the North-West Company of Canada, in carrying on a very extensive trade with the interior.

It has been estimated that two thousand people passed over it, yearly, when that company was in the hey day of its prosperity, and although it had been long abandoned it will readily be believed that it presented no serious difficulty.

Respectfully submitted,

S. J. DAWSON.

ADDENDA.

Document submitted in reference to the strictures published in England by an Officer of the Expeditionary Force.

A publication having appeared in England which not only gives a very erroneous view of the proceedings generally on the Red River Expedition of 1870, but is in most of its statements and references in absolute contradiction with facts easily established, many of which must have been well known to the writer, and this publication having obtained, through the medium of Blackwood's Magazine, a very wide circulation, it seems desirable that some of its most prominent mis-statements should be corrected. In referring to the strictures contained in that publication, it is not my intention to advert to the political aspect of the case, but merely to deal with certain facts with which I am personally conversant, and which it is desirable, in the interest of justice and truth, to place in juxtaposition with the statements made by the writer.

As regards the political and religious influences into which the writer has so largely entered, therefore, it may be enough to say that political and religious feeling, as applicable to and influencing each other, do sometimes run high and exceed the bounds of moderation in this country; and that the treatment of public men, through one or other of these exciting topics sometimes verges upon personality and abuse, and hence it may not have seemed improbable to "An officer of the Expeditionary Force" that his articles in *Blackwood* might become the text for that class of writers to whom no statement that damages a political opponent comes amiss, and thus afford the means of gratifying some feeling of personal hostility for real or supposed wrong. In this calculation, however, he seems to have failed most signally, for, notwithstanding the high disdain with which he affects to treat Canadian politics, he has himself become guilty, in a hitherto unknown degree, of the practice he condemns, and has succeeded in producing an article, so scandalous, that although several have published it entire, no Canadian journalist has yet, that I am aware of, been found so far lost to a sense of propriety and honor as, in his own writing, to avail himself of its calumnies.

The writer has entered somewhat vehemently into the corruption he asserts to be prevalent in Canadian affairs, but he might, perhaps, with advantage, be reminded that corruption has many phases and conceals itself under many guises; a close observer of human nature, not labouring under a sense of unrewarded merit, might perhaps see the spirit of the corruptionist as strong in him who takes vengeance for favors refused, as in him who reciprocates or in some way pays for favors received.

At page 713 of the December number of *Blackwood*, it is stated that "it is almost beyond a doubt that had the priestly party in Canada suc-

"ceeded through their mouth-pieces, Messrs. Cartier, Langevin & Co., in "preventing an armed expedition being sent to Red River, &c."

Here it is distinctly stated (in the *un-English* and somewhat vulgar mode in which politicians are occasionally referred to on this side of the Atlantic), that "*Messrs. Cartier, Langevin and Co.*" were the mouth-pieces of those who sought to prevent an armed expedition being sent out to Red River. If this means anything, it means that these two Ministers not only were against the expedition being sent, but actually *spoke against it*, were in fact the "*mouth-pieces*" of those who opposed it, and yet they were both influential members of the Cabinet, of whose policy it was a cardinal point that the expedition should be sent. A Cabinet Minister, the leader of the Government—as one of them indeed, during the illness of the Premier, was —being the spokesman, the "*mouth-piece*" of the Opposition, is something novel under the British system of constitutional Government, which, perhaps, the writer does not understand; but though there seems to have been one "officer of the expeditionary force" silly enough to write such nonsense, it can hardly be supposed that there are any of the ordinary readers of *Blackwood*, stupid enough to believe it, or ignorant enough not to know that it is impossible.

With regard to the ascertion as to those two members of the Cabinet being in any way opposed to the expedition, I must state, in direct contradiction of the writer in *Blackwood* that, whether to secure the success of conciliation, or to enforce submission, the sending of the armed force was sustained, and, in every way within the power of their respective Departments, provided for by the two Ministers so untruthfully arraigned, as resisting the policy of the Government of which they were leading members.

Another fiction is expressed as follows, (p. 714) :—"Mr. Riel had pre- "viously been invited to send delegates to Ottawa to explain to the Gov- "ernment what the rebel demands really were." The writer of the foregoing could not but know well that no communication or invitation whatever was sent to Riel, but that as soon as it was understood that there really was discontent in the country, culminating in open resistance to the proposed new order of things, some gentlemen were sent by the Government to invite the people, without any reference whatever to Riel, to represent their grievances. What influence Mr. Riel may have had in the appointment of the delegates, at a meeting at which the loyalists as well as the rebels attended, is beside the question, but that he individually was invited to send delegates, as so distinctly asserted in the "narative" is simply unsustained by any written document or other evidence whatever.

At page 717 it is stated as follows:—

"From the Lake of the Woods to Fort Garry was about 100 miles in a "straight line, by land, but there was only a road made for about 60 miles "of that distance, the unmade portion being laid out over most difficult "swamps. If, therefore, the troops could not advance by that route, *as was* "*subsequently found to be the case*, the only other way of reaching Manitoba "was *via* the Winnepeg River, the navigation of which was known to be so "difficult and dangerous that none but experienced guides ever attempted "it. There were about 30 portages to be got over in the 160 *miles thus* "*added to the total length* of the distance to be traversed."

It is here distinctly intimated that the expedition started with the

view of passing overland from the Lake of the Woods, but that it was "*subsequently found*" that the troops could not advance by that route, but had, by taking the Winnepeg route, *to add* 160 *miles extra* of difficult and dangerous navigation to the distance to be traversed. The memorandum of the two routes I had submitted to the military authorities, before leaving Ottawa; (page 10 of the foregoing report) shews that instead of its being "*subsequently*" found" that a part of the route I had laid out for the expedition had to be abandoned and another adopted, the latter was in fact determined upon from the first, as indicated by myself before leaving Ottawa. Those who deal in fanciful narratives should have long memories, and the "officer of the expeditionary force" should have thought of this, when he penned the following paragraph in the continuation of his "narative" in the January number, page 71, with which I leave him on this point, to contradict himself.

"Previous to leaving Prince Arthur's Landing, Colonel Woolseley had "sent a proclamation into the Red River settlement, informing the people "of the objects of the expedition, and calling upon all loyal men to assist "him in carrying them out. Copies of it were sent to the Protestant and "Roman Catholic Bishops, also to the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Com-"pany at Fort Garry, who were at the same time requested by letter to "take measures for pushing on the road to the Lake of the Woods, already "partially made. *It was never anticipated that this road would be completed "in time for us to use it*, even should there be no hostilities."

This extract, at least, proves the reverse of the previous statement in respect of the non-completion of the road being a "subsequent" discovery.

At page 717, (December number), the following statement appears:—

"When early in 1870, arrangements were being made for the dispatch of "the Expedition, the Canadian Ministers impressed upon the Military "authorities, responsible for its success, that by the time the troops had "been collected together on the shores of Thunder Bay, the road from thence "to Shebandowan would be fit for traffic, and that good roads would have "been constructed over all the portages by the Public Works Department."

This story bears its own contradiction, for, is it likely, I may ask, that the Canadian Ministers impressed upon the military authorities, that a state of things existed so utterly inconsistent with what their Engineer in charge, reported to them?

At various conferences between myself and the Ministers, as well as with the military authorities, the actual state of the road was distinctly described to be just such as this very writer admits it to have been. The statement which appears in my report, was moreover given to the military authorities (see page 7) in writing, and before the Expedition left, it appeared, also, in my printed report, and yet according to this *truthful* writer the Canadian Ministers impressed upon the military authorities, that all this was really not the case, and that the road was actually made the whole way; or, so nearly so, that it would be finished before the Expedition could reach it. We are asked to believe, in short, that Ministers impressed on the military authorities that I had made roads, where in writing, in print, and by word of mouth, I declared that I had done nothing of the kind. Really when this writer next tries his hand at romance, he should

endeavor to keep more within the range of probability,—such stories are not worth contradicting.

Coming to the January number of *Blackwood.* and passing the political allusions, and the references to another branch of the service, the following passage occurs at page 51:—

"Now and then these storms were accompanied by rain of quite a "tropical character, after which the numerous streams became so swollen, "that bridges were swept away, and long portions of the road, which had "been constructed with infinite toil, were completely destroyed."

There is just so much truth in this that one small bridge was damaged, a culvert loosened, and some clayey portions of the newly made road-bed rendered, for a time, very soft and sticky. In making roads in such a country, the bulk of the labor consists in getting rid of the timber and grubbing out the roots. Now, the writer of the "narrative" plainly intimates that the fruits of this "infinite toil were completely destroyed," a result somewhat puzzling, as it was only possible, on the supposition that the flood had performed the extraordinary freak of replanting the trees. Yet such is the difficulty to which wilful exaggeration leads.

"At page 56 (January number) it is said:—"Our transport horses were "very fat when they landed, and had to begin work at once, so that, altho' "allowed to eat as much oats and hay as they could, they quickly fell off "dreadfully in condition."

It is perhaps a trivial circumstances to notice, but I do so merely to correct the error, into which the narrative falls in almost every matter of fact treated of. The truth is the horses were put upon cavalry rations, which are not sufficient for continuous hard work and hence they fell off.

Many of them became sick and unfit for use, to such an extent that at one time no less than sixty were reported to be in hospital.

It is customary in the lumber operations in the woods in this country, where the labor for the horses employed is very hard, to give them all the hay and oats they can eat, but it was only after the effects of stinted rations had become too obvious, that they were allowed sufficient food for the labor they were performing, and they then began to recover rapidly.

The writer goes on to say, that "a large proportion of the horses were "soon unfit for draught, owing to sore shoulders. Two causes contributed "chiefly to this; first, the badness of the collars; and, secondly, the care-"lessness of the drivers. The harness had been provided by the Canadian "Government, and, like all the military stores supplied by it for the Ex-"pedition, was of an inferior description obtained, by contract, &c." p. 56, "January No.

The narrative goes on to state that plenty of harness and other stores were in the Imperial Magazines, ready to be handed over at less price than the vastly inferior articles obtained, but that to suit the corrupt practices of the Canadian Ministers, the stores were taken from political friends, &c.

I believe it is really undisputed that the stores were all of the very best quality that the country could produce. The bulk of the voyageurs and workmen were all accustomed to live on the most substantial food, and much fatigue and hardship as they will go through uncomplainingly, they will not submit to inferior stores or supplies. On this Expedition, the stores for all were of the same quality, and instead of there having been

any complaint the writer of the "narrative" is the first to state that they were inferior. The writer must have known well that the harness in the Imperial stores was not adapted to the service or the purposes for which it was required; and with regard to the horses having been rendered unfit for work from sore shoulders, through the badness of the collars, &c., I shall merely quote one passage from Col. Wily's report to the Militia Department, written without reference to the "*narrative*," and already published.

"The harness, *after being inspected and approved by the Imperial Officers, "was carefully fitted to the horses, and numbered with the number of the horse "it was intended for, by the collar makers of the Royal Artillery Battery, then "stationed at Toronto.*"

Here, then, we have on the one side, the official report, over his own signature, of a man of honor, whose good name, upright character and truthfulness have never yet been impeached, written in the midst of the community where he is known, and where the facts, too, are known, and would immediately confront him if they were the reverse of what he states; and, on the other side, the "narrative" of one who, in every circumstance of the Expedition seems to have taxed his inventive genius to find modes of expressing himself in absolute contradiction of the facts, and so remote from the scene that whatever purpose he may have had in view, could probably be effected before refutation or denial could confront him, if any one should think his tergiversations of sufficient moment to be noticed.

At page 61, (January number), the narrative says:—"According to "the arrangements made with the Canadian authorities, the boats were to "have been handed over to us complete with all their own stores, but unfortunately, from want of an organized system and from the lack of an "official staff to carry out the instructions received from Ottawa, the details "of all such arrangements invariably fell to the ground."

"The result was, that as every six or eight boats arrived daily, they "had to be fitted with rowlocks, masts, sails, so that really the onus of fitting out the boats devolved on the troops, each Captain looking out the "equipments for the boats of his own brigade."

These statements are as untruthful and malicious, as I have pointed out preceding ones to be.

The boats were fitted out with everything which could possibly be required at Thunder Bay. All the articles specified in the annexed lists were sent with every brigade; nothing whatever wanting. True, rowlocks were lost in quantity, and oars and rudders broken in the weary process of dragging them up the Kaministiquia—but who lost those things?

Boats, partly manned by inexperienced soldiers, reached the Matawin Bridge, frequently with nearly all the outfit lost. Such boats as were handed over at Thunder Bay were left at that place (Matawin Bridge), and the voyageurs had again to take them in hand, and drag them through the rapids, higher up.

At Shebandowan Lake the "Canadian authorities" or those who acted for them had, at least, evinced their foresight by providing and sending forward to that place a second supply of everything in the way of boat outfit which could possibly be required. This enabled them to fit out the

boats a second time. They had also sent forward carpenters and boat-builders, who quickly mended the boats, made masts, and replaced the broken oars. The author of the "narrative" says the *onus* of this work fell on the troops. I can only say the statement is altogether unfounded; there were twenty-seven carpenters and boat-builders maintained at Shebandowan Lake, who did all of that work.

Col. McNeill, V.C., a gentleman who had the esteem and hearty goodwill of every soldier and voyageur attached to the expedition, and who, I may add, had a far higher appreciation of what was proper, and what was required, than the author of the narrative, was in chief command at Shebandowan Lake, and he, with the assistance of Mr. Graham, an officer attached to the voyageur force, took good care that the *onus* of looking out the equipment for the brigades did not fall on each captain to a greater extent than to see that he had everything he required. The *onus* of looking after these arrangements fell pretty exclusively on Col. McNeill, and Mr. Graham, and it could not have been on shoulders better able to bear it.

At Shebandowan Lake the boats, after being overhauled by the carpenters, were handed over complete with all their own stores, and skilled voyageurs told off for their guidance. I should hardly have been fulfilling my duty to the Canadian Government or the country, if I had handed voyageurs and boats over to men unaccustomed to the management of either, before the difficulties of getting them to the smooth water of Shebandowan Lake had been overcome. Had I done so, there would have been a different result to the Expedition, and the author of the narrative would have had another story to tell.

He says: "The (voyageur) staff, with one or two exceptions, were the "most helpless, useless men it is possible to imagine. Instead of being "permitted to choose his own assistants, &c., he had all sorts of hangers-on "about Ministers forced upon him. Some were broken-down drunkards. "All belonged more or less to the class known in America as loafers, men "who lived, no one knew how, spending all their time in bars, liquoring "up and smoking."

In regard to the foul aspersion thrown in such elegant phrase on my staff, I can only say, that if there be a degree of ingratitude more reprehensible than another it is exhibited by him, who, to use a trite saying, "turns round to abuse the bridge which carried him safely over."

The staff so much maligned comprised two classes of men, the office clerks and the bronzed veterans who went forward with the Expedition. The latter, to whom, no doubt, the author of the "narrative" more especially alludes, were of the class who have their home in the forests, and whose summers are spent, not "in bars liquoring up," but on stormy lakes or foaming rivers, in the pursuit of an adventurous and dangerous calling. For them I can say that there is not a more steady, sober, or hard-working class of people in the community. If proof were needed of the efficiency of those who accompanied the Expedition, I could point to the numerous letters given to them by the captains of their respective brigades, thanking them for their services, but there is a still better proof, plain and palpable to every one, in the fact of their having carried the Expedition safely to its destination.

As to their "liquoring up" there was no liquor allowed; its use was prohibited, by law, on the Public Works, and I had induced the command-

ant of the field force not to permit its being taken forward at all on the journey, as otherwise, great risk might arise to the men when engaged with the boats in rapids. It was accordingly forbidden, and the author of the narrative must be hard driven for a ground of accusation against the voyageurs, when he implies the contrary.

In regard to the office staff, they did not come at all in contact with the military, and, whatever their faults may have been, "liquoring up" certainly was not one of them.

The writer of the narrative proceeds to say, (page 62):—

"We were much amused one day with a young gentleman, who called "himself the bookkeeper, at one of the roadside stations. He, upon being "asked the employment he had been hired for, said most naively, that "having a brother in Manitoba whom he desired to see, his uncle, the Min- "ister of Public Works, had placed him upon the staff of the Department "so that he might be taken through in one of our boats without expense "to himself."

This is a pure fabrication. The Minister of Public Works had no relative whatever, on the expedition, and it is difficult to find any explanation that could give colour to the slander, for there was but one on the Expedition who had a relation in the North-West. A lad of 17 years at one of the way stations had a brother in some remote part of that region, and he, I presume, is the person alluded to; he was placed there to receive stores and to give receipts to the carters, and with a boyish love of mischief, may have crammed the man taking notes, as others seem to have done, with a great deal of nonsense but, that he uttered anything so ridiculous as claiming the Minister of Public Works as his uncle I do not believe. This lad did not go forward with the Expedition, nor was it ever intended that he should do so. Here, then, is a purely fabulons incident brought in by the author of the narrative for a very unworthy purpose.

The Minister of Public Works had done all that he could, to advance the Expedition. The officers of his Department were carrying it through in the face of great difficulties, all working earnestly for that one object and here this writer of fiction, not content with the general abuse in which he has indulged so freely, manufactures and gives currency to a pitiful and spiteful tale in order to damage that gentleman in the public estimation. The tale, too, is as stupid as it is malicious, for here at least, it is easily refuted, but then no doubt the author of the narrative reckoned on such tattle being believed in England.

The writer of the narrative says, (page 52):—

"The construction of this road was under the Public Works' Depart- "ment, the gentleman representing which in the Ministry, was a French "Canadian, and known to be heart and soul with the priestly party in "Quebec; and, therefore, most favorably inclined to Riel. Men of a sus- "picious turn of mind, began to say that the fact of there being no road "ready for our advance, was part and parcel of a political scheme whereby "the departure of the Expedition might be stopped alogether."

A little further on, this veracious writer says:—

"Every probable, indeed almost every possible contingency had to be "thought of and provided for, and it may be confidently asserted, that no ex-

"pedition has ever started more thoroughly complete or better ared "for its work."

Indeed! and under whose direction was every possible contingency provided for? How were the beautiful boats, which carried the Expedition safely through procured? Whence come the double supply of outfit so thoroughly complete, that when one set was lost in the rough Kaministiquia, another was in readiness?

It certainly was not the author of the "narrative," who had the foresight to look out all these things, but the much maligned Minister of Public Works, or what amounts to the same thing, his agents; but then probably, his course in this respect was "part and parcel of a political scheme, "whereby the departure of the Expedition might be stopped altogether."

"Men of a suspicious turn of mind" say many wise things, no doubt. But the author of the "narrative" may, nevertheless, derive some advantage from learning, that men of a turn of mind not very suspicious, with the light of his production thrown on past events, say and believe, that there at one time existed, in another quarter, some evidence of a design to stop or abandon the Expedition.

When the boats were being torn and bruised in the rocky Kaministiquia, and the main body of the force still lay in inactivity at Thunder Bay, the writer of the narrative may remember that it came to be whispered, even among high authorities in the field, that the Expedition was a failure, that the regular troops, if they were not to be overtaken by winter, must return at once, and he may probably be able to say whether there was not, at least, a little disappointment experienced in his own particular case, when General Lindsay, instead of issuing an order to return, commanded an ad vance.

Had that gallant officer done otherwise, it requires no suspicious turn of mind to imagine how this reviler of other men would have gloated over the disoppointment and distress, which would have occasioned to the gentlemen whom he so foully calumniates, and who, no doubt, had disappointed him cruelly.

One little word, which it was in their power to utter, would have made them as angels of light in his eyes; but alas, it was not spoken.

Taken as a whole, and viewed in the light of a romance, the "narrative," all in all, is a very readable paper; the toadying to the commander of the field force, whose spurs had to be somehow won, the exaggeration of difficulties, the inferential implication, where not broadly stated, that every act of any value was done, if not against civilian obstructions, at least without civilian aid, are all very natural under the circumstances, while the scandalous imputations of priestly influence, brought into play to shield a murderer from the arm of justice; the plots, according to the writer, of Canadian politicians; the almost, as he expresses it, Washingtonian jobbery of Canadian Ministers are all highly spiced incentives to that indignation it was, no doubt, the object of the writer to excite, to give additional importance to the obstacles which some one, modestly implied, rather than named, had to overcome.

Drawing aside the flimsy veil, however, with which the fictions of the narrative have interwoven the skeletons of some facts; laying aside, for the moment, the superficial views with which the mere reader of

romance reads but to be amused, and looking beneath the surface, as practical men, investigating what purports to be a narrative of actual occurrences, will look, and what do we find? Let us see. And, in this search after truth, let us take only such modicum of fact, as has, by some accident, crept into the "narrative" itself, avoiding altogether any reference to the detail of the circumstances I have given in the preceding report.

It will be admitted, as in fact, by the preceding report, it is proved, that before leaving Ottawa, I had prescribed and explained every step of the route the Expedition was designed to follow. This, it will also be seen, was from Thunder Bay, Lake Superior, by land to Shebandowan Lake, and from thence, by boat, by river, lake and portage *via the Winnipeg* to Fort Garry. On the latter part of the route, from Shebandowan to Fort Garry, it is also undisputed, that the Expedition proceeded every step, exactly as I had prescribed, with complete success, and without accident or mis-adventure of the least importance. We are, therefore, narrowed down to the link of road connecting Thunder Bay, on Lake Superior, with the inland waters of the interior at Shebandowan, as *the one only obstacle* by which the Expedition was delayed, and on this we shall let the "narrative" tell its own story.

At page 54, (January number), the "narrative" divides the distance between these two points as follows:—"The first extending to Strawberry "Creek, about eighteen miles; the second to the Matawin River, about "eight miles further on; and the third from thence to Shebandowan, about "twenty-two miles more.,'

Describing the sections as thus divded, at pages 55–56, the "narrative" says:—"As the road descends into the valley of the Matawin and enters "the third section, the charact r of the soil and scenery again changes—"the red clay is left behind, *and one enters a rolling country of rich clayey "loam with sandy rises here and there all thickly wooded over.* Two unforda-"ble streams, one of 24, the other of about 33 yards in width, had to be "bridged over in this section. As already stated, *nearly* the whole of the "last eighteen miles, including those two bridges, had to be made after "our arrival."

At page 52, we also find the following: "As stated in our previous "article, the Ottawa authorities had announced, that the road from Thunder "Bay to Shebandowan Lake would be fit for traffic before the end of May," (which is quite untrue), "whereas by that date not more than *thirty miles "of it were finished*, and many miles were still uncut through the primeval "forest."

We thus see by the first of these last two etrxacts, that *not all, but "nearly* the whole of the last eighteen miles, including these two bridges, had to be made after our arrival." By the last etrxact we find that "*thirty miles of the road were finished*," leaving, as by the other extract, eighteen miles unfinished, of which *not all*, but "many miles were still uncut through the primeval forest." Of course the statements of the "narrative" as regads the facilities existing are short of the truth, but taking them exactly as they are, we find, that 30 miles of road were finished and eighteen remained to be completed, on which however, work had been done, though its amount is not specified, when the Expedition landed at Thunder Bay. But it further appears by the "narrative," page 60, that the last three miles of this nearest to the point on

Shebandowan Lake, selected for final embarkation were navigable, and the boats and stores taken over that reach of water, which reduces the total distance to fifteen miles of partly unmade and partly incomplete road.

Here, then, laying aside extraneous matter and sifted out of the "narrative" itself divested of all references to Hannibal crossing the Alps, Cæsar landing on the shores of Britain, or Napier marching upon Magdala, we have the naked fact, anything but creditable to some one, staring us in the face, that an Expedition of nearly *two thousand able-bodied men picked men in fact, were stuck for a lengthened period in traversing something less than fifteen miles of "a rolling country of rich clayey loam, with sandy rises here and "there.* This startling conclusion, stripped of all metaphor and circumlocution, divested of all reference to ministerial corruptions or other fanciful fictions with which it has been surrounded, thus palpably presented to the enquiring reader from the statements contained in the narrative itself, reveals a state of things, where manifest and glaring error—interposed between the Expedition and that forward progress which the country had a right to expect—might have led, not only as it did to the delay and expense involved, but to serious disaster besides.

It is, therefore, indisputable that some terrible blunder was committed, as, otherwise, the distance stated, over such a country as that described, *could not by any possibility have delayed the advance of the Expedition as it confessedly did.* The whole gist of the question, as to what caused the delay, hinges upon this point. The writer of the narrative has himself unconsciously reduced it to that; and, notwithstanding, that he has stirred up the muddy waters to conceal the rock on which the Expedition so nearly split, it is desirable that it should be brought fully into light.

Certainly, the fault was not in the material of which the Expedition was composed, for, all in all, civilians and military, with some unimportant exceptions, a finer body of men never embarked in any enterprise; and after the force, so composed, with stores, provisions, tools, boats, implements, every appliance in short that foresight could provide,—and which did in fact prove commensurate with every want that arose—had landed at Thunder Bay, it is the merest twaddle to drown the enquiry with the cry of Ottawa corruptions, which, *even if they had ever existed had ceased to have any power over the force in the field.*

Although quite manifest therefore from the preceding report, I shall succinctly shew how the Expedition came to be delayed. Before leaving Ottawa, it was fully understood with the commander of the field force, that as many of the military as could conveniently be employed, should be detailed to aid in completing the road to Shebandowan, a fact somewhat inconsistent, no doubt, with the pretension that the Ottawa Ministers had led the military authorities to believe that this road was finished.

Notwithstanding this agreement, it will be seen by reference to my report, page , what value of labour and aid was received from the military. This, however, is but a small matter, as military labour to aid in the construction of the unfinished part of the road was not necessary to its early completion, for which ample provision had been made independently of it, but it was most desirable, in order to hasten the work forward Having been led to expect and calculate upon it, and not receiving it, was of small consequence, however, compared with the fact that I was deprived

of the services, for that purpose, of about five hundred of the very best of the voyageurs, who were relied upon for work on the road, but were put instead to the profitless—and to men who knew it to be worse than useless—heart-breaking task of dragging the boats up the river. Had these men been left at road work, I have no hesitation in saying that a great deal of time would have been saved in the progress of the Expedition; indeed, none would have been lost, for by the time that the supplies, boats, &c., had been all accumulated at the end of the first thirty miles, admitted to be finished, the force of workmen on the balance of the road would have completed that too. But, on the contrary, a vast power of available labour was expended on unproductive work, harassing beyond measure to the men and terribly destructive to the sole means of transport, on which alone the Expedition depended for the long journey to which this was but the gateway. These boats, I may remark, had been built in different parts of the country during the preceding winter, with exceeding great care. When it was first anticipated that a Military Expedition might become necessary, I had, under the instructions of the Government, ordered and superintended their construction, in which the just medium suited to the occasion had to be observed between two opposite principles—strength, on the one hand, to endure the severe trials to which they had to be subjected on their long voyage, and lightness on the other, to admit of their being taken by waggon to Shebandowan Lake, and transported by the men over the numerous but short portages of the interior. Before the Expedition started, I was condemned violently in some quarters, for having erred on the side of lightness and made them too frail, and disaster was prophesied from that cause. When then they were subjected to an ordeal for which they were never intended, on the sharp pointed rocks of the Kaministiquia, disaster seemed to be made certain by the expenditure of valuable labour, squandered in this worse than useless operation; and most certainly, in addition to the expense and delay, it is probable that entire failure would have followed, had not the provision previously made for repair and reconstruction been so thorough and complete.

I can hardly close this part without some reference to one of the most vicious parts of the "narrative," where, at page 65, of the January number, it is stated that the Mission Indians left the service at the instigation of their priest, who had tampered with them to try and break down the Expedition. To my certain knowledge, the priest, an aged and most benevolent man, did everything in his power to induce these Indians to go on, anxious as he was that they should benefit by the excellent pay they were receiving, and as to any other motive, I do not think that the idea of either promoting or retarding the Expedition ever entered the good man's head, who, in that till then secluded locality, where he has spent the best part of his life, had scarcely heard of such an event as Riel's rebellion, before our arrival. It is but a sample, however, of the extent to which the writer of the "narrative" can go, when he does not hesitate to have a thrust at an aged and devoted missionary, who is ever ready to help all, and was never known to injure any one. These Indians simply refused the service because they had been worked like beasts of burden—at labour which their experience told them was worse than useless—they having done

much more than their share, man for man, of dragging the boats up the Kaministiquia, and absolutely lost confidence in the management that subjected the men to privation and the Expedition to loss, without any object apparent to their simple minds.

I find one point on which I can agree with the author of the narrative, where, (page 65), he says:—"No spirit ration means no crime," and I am not disposed to quarrel with him for any credit he may claim for the circumstance of liquor having been forbidden to the troops. Its use was contrary to law in the vicinity of Public Works, and I had strongly urged on the commandant of the field force the necessity of forbidding it on the journey. I was, however, somewhat amused at the parade which was made of the matter, and on writing to Mr. Van Norman, the Chief Magistrate of that section, mentioned the subject to him. It will be seen from his reply, that abstemiousness was not always carried to the extent that the author of the "narrative" would have his readers believe, but that there was some little indulgence in the reprehensible practice of "liquoring up" now and then.

SIMCOE, 12th March, 1871.

DEAR SIR,—I have been confined to my bed since the 28th of February last past, with a very severe attack, and am only now able to sit up in bed for a short time; in that way I am now writing; pray accept the above as my reason for not answering your favors of the 17th and 18th ultimo.

In reply to yours of the 18th, I would remark, that on arrival at Prince Arthur's Landing, last spring, I found *two* canteens in full operation there, one for the use of the 60th Rifles (Imperial troops), and the other for the use of the Canadian Volunteers.

I soon entered into correspondence with the officers in charge, with a view to their suppression, and had little difficulty, as far as the canteen of the volunteers was concerned, but not so with the canteen for the use of the 60th Rifles.

About this time the troops moved up the road, leaving only a rear-guard at the station, and finding that the canteen still continued open for their use, I at once ordered it to be closed. The officer commanding protested, and wrote to Col. Wolseley, who had established his headquarters at Ward's Landing, and on the return of the messenger I received the following letter from Col. W., and enclosed therewith was a copy of his orders to the officer commanding at P. A. Landing:—

(Copy.)

CAMP, WARD'S LANDING,

22nd July, 1870.

DEAR SIR,—The officer commanding at Prince Arthur's Landing has written to me, saying that you had ordered his canteen to be closed. He assures me that his men are only allowed to purchase one pint of beer a day, and that he has not had a drunken man since the departure of the headquarters.

I have written him the memorandum of which the enclosed is a copy.

Canteen men, in general, are a bad lot, and frequently endeavour to take advantage of their position, by selling liquor without the commanding officer's knowledge.

I am most anxious to aid you in every way in your endeavour to maintain the law, and you have rendered me great assistance in keeping order amongst the civil followers of this force. I trust that during our stay here we may continue to work together cordially.

The issue of a pint of beer per man daily, within the precincts of the Military Camp, is a purely military affair, and I trust you will not consider it necessary to interfere with the arrangement.

If you have, at any time, any complaint to make regarding the manner in which the canteen affairs are carried out, I am sure the officer commanding at Prince Arthur's Landing will at once take steps for rectifying anything you may complain about, and I shall be glad to hear from you upon any such matter.

Believe me, Dear Sir,
Faithfully yours,
(Signed,) G. J. WOLSELEY.

To D. D. Van Norman, Esq.,
Stipendiary Magistrate,
Prince Arthur's Landing.

MEMORANDUM.

CAMP, WARD'S LANDING, 22nd July, 1870.

SIR,—With reference to your letter upon the subject of your canteen. The Magistrate can prevent the sale of all intoxicating liquors at Prince Arthur's Landing. *But he cannot prevent the issue of a pint of beer to each soldier daily, so long as such is done within the precincts of the Camp A Camp is like barracks, the officer Commanding can prevent any one from entering within its precincts. It is like a private dwelling. No one can obtain admittance except by a legal search warrant.*

I write to Mr. Van Norman by this messenger, you had better see him in this matter, for I am sure he is anxious to be of use to the military, &c.

(Signed,) G. J. WOLSELEY.
Commanding Red River Expedition.

To the Officer Commanding
At Prince Arthur's Landing.

I certainly did infer at the time, and am still under the impression, that the reason why Col. Wolseley did not take and maintain a canteen at headquarters, during the march to Red River, was the difficulty in transporting so bulky and weighty an article as beer, or spirits, along so difficult a line of march, and such an ever increasing distance from his source of supply.

I came to the above conclusion the more readily, inasmuch as the above correspondence related solely to the rear-guard stationed at the Landing.

Comment on the above letters is unnecessary. They speak for themselves. I will merely add, in closing, that I was and am still deeply obliged to you for the valuable aid and assistance you afforded me in my endeavour to maintain order, and uphold the laws in that remote region, and I hope and trust that I may long have the good fortune to have you associated with me in the discharge of the many onerous and unpleasant duties that come within the scope of my office. I am only too happy to be able to record my humble judgment in favor of a public servant (in the person of yourself), through whose direct instrumentality, the North West Expedition of 1870, was so eminently and entirely successful.

Had Col. Wolseley followed your advice, the terrible ascent of the Kaministiquia, with its losses and tremendous cost would have been avoided, and much valuable time, and a large amount of treasure saved to the country.

I am, &c., &c.,
(Signed,) D. D. VAN NORMAN.

To S. J. Dawson, Esq., Ottawa.

Among the military men who will likely be remembered for some time to come, in connection with the history of past events in the North West, are two who, in circumstances perhaps not very dissimilar, have acted very differently.

The one led a military expedition to the Red River Settlement many years ago, and was distinguished by that high and gallant bearing which best becomes a soldier, by kindly feeling, forbearance and truth.

The other, according to his own account, accompanied the last expedition, but his narrative shews him to have been remarkable for the absence of these qualities.

Col. Crofton was one of the first to shew what the Territories of the North West really were. The information which he gave to the public, in the shape of evidence, before a Committee of the House of Commons (England), in 1857, attracted general attention, and although many years have passed since then, and much investigation has since taken place, it has not been found that he was in error in any one essential point. His name is still held in grateful and affectionate remembrance in the Red River Settlement.

The author of the "narrative" had, it may reasonably be assumed, the means within his reach of doing more than Col. Crofton did. He might at least, like him, have disseminated truthful information, might instead of giving circulation to an article so venemous as his narrative, have written something to soften asperities, and, in his general proceedings, have acted in such a manner as to promote the happiness of others, and do lasting credit to himself. But, instead of adopting a course so honorable, so strong has been the principle of evil in him, that he has written a scandalous fiction, remarkable for nothing so much as its folly, unless it be its wickedness.

Col. Crofton, or rather Lieut. Gen. Crofton, for such is now his rank,

is old and the outer world is in darkness to him, for he is blind; but he can look back on a life of unsullied honor, and he has the esteem of mankind, wherever his name is heard, the wide world over.

The doings of both may have a place in future "narratives" of the West, and, if such should prove to be the case, the one will be remembered as a true and gallant soldier, who, in the early history of the country, did what lay in his power to bring it into notice, and advance its prosperity; and, as time rolls on and lends its halo to the past, his place will be among the good and great of former years.

Where then will be the officer of the Expeditionary Force, the author of the "narrative"?

Forgotten, most likely, but if remembered, it will be as one who having it in his power to do good, chose the opposite course, and who, to gratify his resentment, did not hesitate to asperse and calumniate those who had done him kindness.

But enough has been said to shew the character of the narrative. Its author has perhaps gained one object of his ambition, but he will perhaps find, that he has as signally failed in commending himself to the esteem of those with whom he was associated in an honorable enterprise, as in injuring those against whom his erring shafts were directed; and when the facts come to be understood, and the dream of fame in which his narrative was conceived, like other visions of fortune woo'd but not won, has passed away, it is not difficult to foresee the light in which he and his production will be regarded.

In the meantime, it is to be regretted that, in this country, where officers of the army have always been held in deservedly high estimation, one should have been found so lost to all sense of honor and propriety as to act in a manner so unbecoming in an officer as the author of "a narrative of the Red River Expedition by an officer of the Expeditionary Force" has done.

S. J. Dawson.

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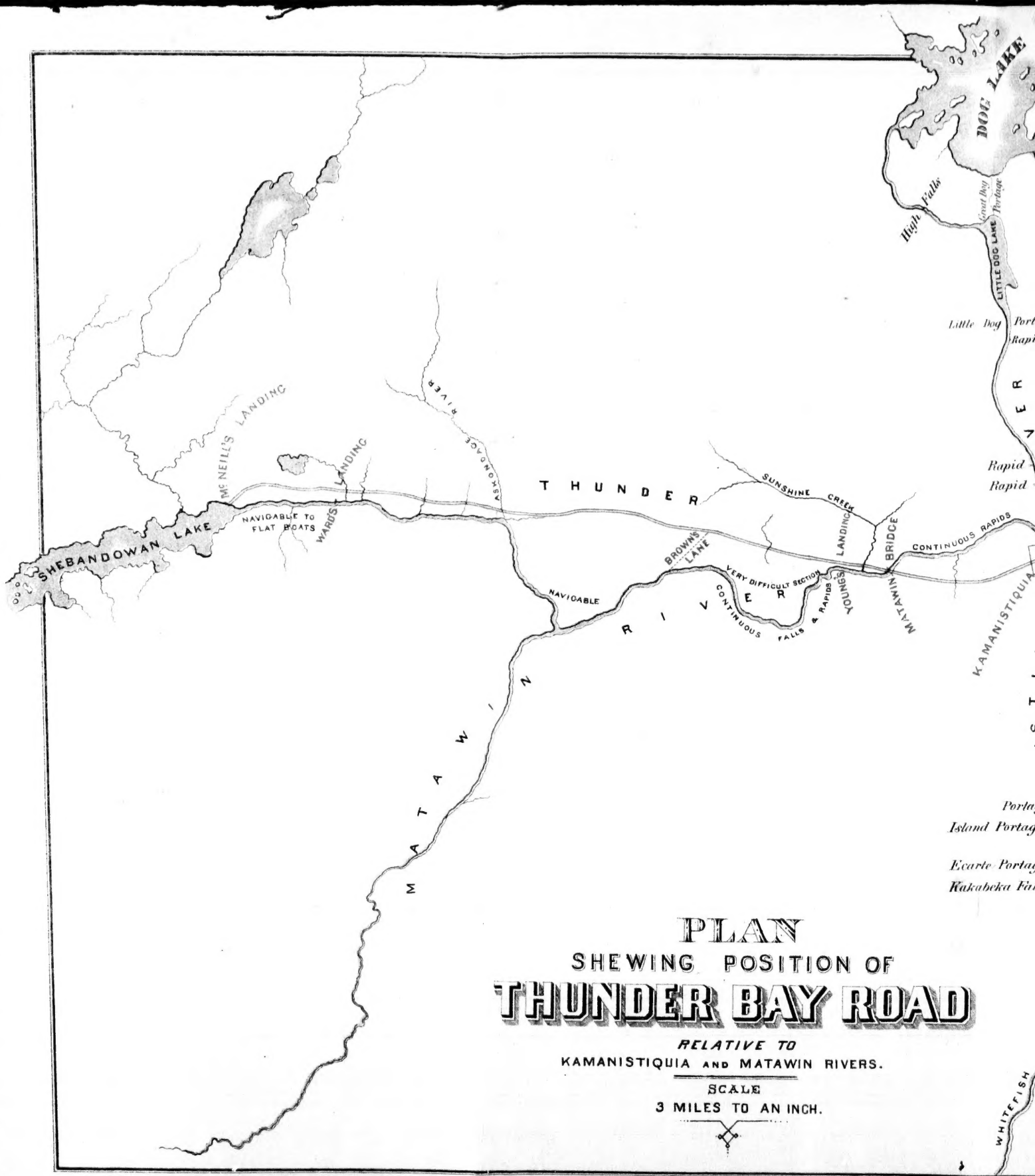


PLAN

SHEWING POSITION OF

THUNDER BAY ROAD

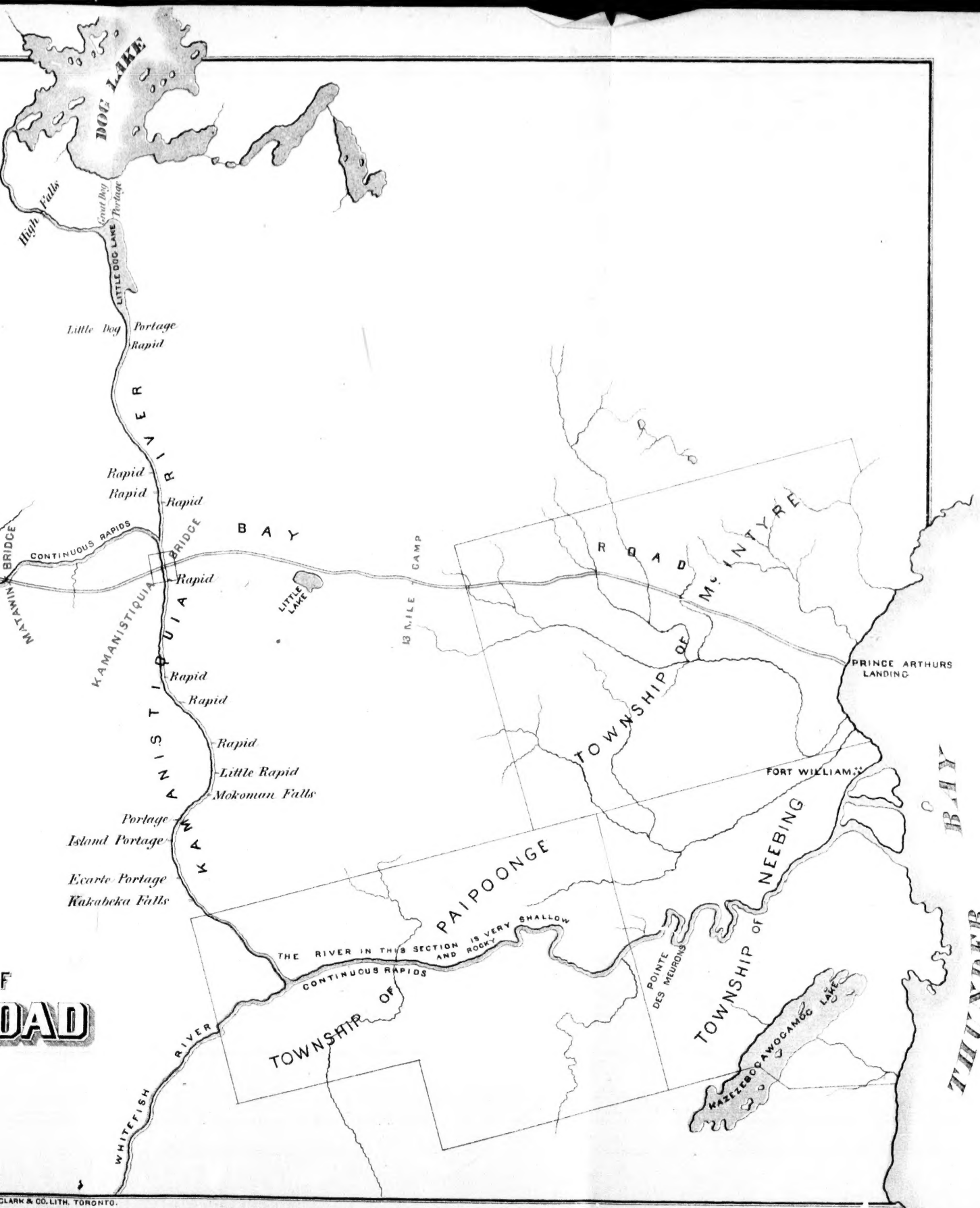
RELATIVE TO

KAMANISTIQUIA AND MATAWIN RIVERS.

SCALE

3 MILES TO AN INCH.

COPP, CLARK & CO. LITH. TORONTO.



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